

“PREPARING STUDENTS FOR PATHS OF SERVICE”: A HISTORY OF MANITOWOC
LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a comprehensive history of Manitowoc Lutheran High School, tracing its development from its founding in the 1950s through its subsequent decades of growth. It examines the school's origins, the expansion of its facilities and programs, and the individuals and events that significantly shaped its mission and identity. The study draws upon archival sources—including school newsletters, yearbooks, and administrative documents—as well as interviews with teachers, administrators, and alumni. Together, these materials recount how the school has consistently pursued its mission of providing Christ-centered secondary education.

INTRODUCTION

Telling a story involves making many decisions. What are the “big” events that must be included? What events can be omitted? Telling the story of Manitowoc Lutheran High School (MLHS) is no exception. Throughout seven decades of operation and thousands of days of classroom instruction, hundreds of teachers and thousands of students have walked the halls of MLHS. To include everything that has happened and everyone who has made it happen would be impossible. It is possible, though, to determine why MLHS exists and the impact it has had on students throughout the decades.¹

This study of MLHS drew upon two primary avenues of research. The first consisted of an examination of archival materials, including periodical newsletters produced by MLHS, historical materials prepared for previous anniversaries, literature created for special events and projects, and other internal records. The second avenue involved in-person interviews with students, teachers, and administrators, both past and present. I am grateful to those who assisted me in locating archival materials and to those who generously dedicated their time to participate in interviews for this study.

While the “big” events, major milestones, and visionary leaders must be included in the story of MLHS, it is essential to remember the everyday, routine parts of the story that are at the

1. As an alumnus of MLHS, I can confidently say that the Christian education I received at MLHS has had a major, positive impact on my life. I am deeply thankful for all the people who contributed to making the school what it is today.

foundation of its mission. Why were the “big” decisions made? Why buy the land? Why construct a building? Why expand it? Why make budgets? Why embark on capital campaigns? Why have principals and presidents and chairmen who lead in the present and plan for the future? All this is so that teachers and students can fill those buildings, so that God’s Word can fill those classrooms and the hearts of those who work and study within them, so that faithful Christians might have the opportunity to contribute to the school and give glory to God through their acts of service and love, and so that students might be well-prepared for whatever Christian vocation they will undertake. “Manitowoc Lutheran High School uses its God-given gifts to help each student become thoroughly equipped for paths of service to our Redeemer.”² This is why MLHS exists, and this is why the story of MLHS is so compelling. Through the years, in the big events and the everyday happenings, MLHS has served its students by preparing them to serve their Redeemer.

2. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Course of Study 2025–2026* (Manitowoc, WI: Manitowoc Lutheran High School, 2025), 5.

FOUNDING AND EARLY YEARS

An Idea (1950–1956)

Years before the milestone of the first day of class at MLHS, a Lutheran high school in the Manitowoc area was merely an idea. On June 12, 1950, the Manitowoc Delegate Conference of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) appointed a Lutheran High School Survey Committee which was formed to study the possibility of establishing a Lutheran high school in the Manitowoc area.³ Pastor Victor Weiland, Lester Wehrwein, E. Kopitzke, Frederic Manthey, and C. Sagerman served on this committee, which met for the first time on February 11, 1951, at First German Lutheran Church in Manitowoc. Over the next several years, the committee was made permanent and continued to consider the need for such a school and the logistics that would be involved in starting one.⁴

The Manitowoc area was growing at this time, with both the city of Manitowoc and Manitowoc County seeing double-digit percentage increases in population over the course of the 1950s.⁵ The city of Manitowoc had only one high school at the time, Lincoln High School, a

3. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Twenty-Fifth Anniversary History* (Manitowoc, WI: Manitowoc Lutheran High School, 1981), 10.

4. Delmar Brick, Hugo Habeck, Lorraine Liese, Jo Ann Lutze, and Elwood Lutze, compilers, *Fortieth Anniversary History* (Manitowoc, WI: Manitowoc Lutheran High School, 1996), 4.

5. Per U.S. Census data, the city of Manitowoc increased in population from 27,598 in 1950 to 32,275 in 1960, and Manitowoc County increased in population from 67,159 in 1950 to 75,215 in 1960.

public institution. There were no Christian high schools in the city.⁶ There was clearly an opportunity for a Christian high school to succeed in the Manitowoc area.

WELS members in Manitowoc were not alone in discussing the possibility of opening a new Lutheran high school. Similar plans were being made elsewhere in WELS at this time; four other area Lutheran high schools would begin operation in the decade of the 1950s⁷: Fox Valley Lutheran (Appleton, WI) in 1953, Luther (Onalaska, WI) in 1957, Lakeside Lutheran (Lake Mills, WI) in 1958, and St. Croix Lutheran (West St. Paul, MN) in 1958.⁸ Those involved in creating these new schools were surely well aware of the effort and commitment that doing so would involve, yet each group decided that the investment would be well worth it. *Christ Through Us: A Pictorial History of the Wisconsin Synod* describes the founding of these new high schools and the dedication that would be required to establish them:

All of these efforts to create new schools required dedicated, generous members and congregations, along with pastors and teachers who often served in extraordinary ways during the early years of the schools—not only teaching but also coaching, directing bands and choirs, and performing countless other tasks in order to provide the students with a well-rounded education. All these schools experienced growth and required building projects of their own. The Lord blessed—and continues to bless—the Christian education blossoming from the area Lutheran high schools of our synod.⁹

This kind of dedication, service, and growth would soon emerge in Manitowoc as the Lutheran High School Survey Committee's conversations began to shift from ideas to action.

6. Roncalli High School, a Catholic institution, opened in Manitowoc in 1965 and is still operational today.

7. Other WELS high schools already in existence included Winnebago Lutheran Academy in Fond du Lac, WI, East Fork Lutheran High School in Whiteriver, AZ, and Racine Lutheran High School in Racine, WI, a high school that was jointly operated with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

8. In addition, Wisconsin Lutheran High School opened in 1955. Until this time, it had operated as a joint effort with the Missouri Synod as the Lutheran High School in Milwaukee. In 1955, that school split into Wisconsin Lutheran High School (WELS) and Milwaukee Lutheran High School (LCMS).

9. John Braun and Joel Otto, *Christ Through Us—A Pictorial History (1850–2025)* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2024), 146.

A major milestone came on October 19, 1952. Articles of Incorporation were filed with the City of Manitowoc under the name The Manitowoc Conference Lutheran High School Association, Inc. This association would be composed of individual members of area WELS congregations who were interested in supporting the new high school venture. It elected a Board of Directors in 1953 and continued to meet regularly. However, there was not yet enough support to open a high school in Manitowoc. So, over the next several years, members of the association worked in their own congregations to communicate information about the idea and to recruit new members to join.¹⁰

By early 1956, support for the association had reached a level which made some believe it was time to act. “Something concrete should be attempted” was stated at an association meeting in February 1956.¹¹ Over the next several months, a committee appointed by the association explored potential sites for the school. Upon inspection of the so-called “Old Madison School,” located on Sixth and State Streets in Manitowoc, the committee found that this building was “very adequate for [their] needs at this time.”¹²

The Madison School was built in 1872–73 and served for many years as a public elementary school for the Manitowoc Public School District. It had three stories and a full basement. Each of the first two stories had four classrooms and several small offices and cloak rooms, while the third story had two small classrooms and a “large assembly room” that often served as a gymnasium.¹³ By the early 1950s, concerned parents and the Manitowoc Board of

10. Brick, Habeck, Liese, Lutze, and Lutze, *Fortieth Anniversary History*, 4.

11. Brick, Habeck, Liese, Lutze, and Lutze, *Fortieth Anniversary History*, 4.

12. “A Challenge in the Making,” *The Visitor*, April 1956, 2.

13. See picture and diagram of the Madison School building in Appendix 1.

Education decided a new Madison school building was needed. The condition of the old building was a primary factor in this decision: “The old building was described as a fire trap and lacking in present day standards in lighting, safety and recreational and educational facilities.”¹⁴ On March 12, 1956, the new Madison Elementary School opened nearby, and the old building became available at a very reasonable price, which was just what the association needed. The city of Manitowoc was willing to lease the old Madison School building to the association for one dollar per year.¹⁵

At a meeting of the association on May 13, 1956, this offer was presented. Considering the condition of the old Madison School building, an estimated \$10,300 would be required to sufficiently renovate the building. In a pivotal moment in MLHS history, by a vote of fifty to five, the association members voted to accept the offer to lease the old Madison School building and open a ninth grade in the fall of 1956.¹⁶ In addition to the cost of the building renovations, an estimated operating budget for the first school year was “in excess of ten thousand dollars (which includes salaries, equipment, chairs and desks, janitor service, utilities, fuel, etc.).”¹⁷ A big decision had been made; now big financial support would be needed.

One of the ways the association would encourage its members to offer that financial support was through the periodical newsletter *The Visitor*. The first issue was published in April 1956. Publication of *The Visitor* continued on a quarterly basis until its successor, *The Clarion*, was introduced in 1962. *The Visitor* informed association members of school news and included

14. *Madison School History* (Manitowoc, WI: Manitowoc County Historical Society, 1956), 9.

15. David Payne, ed., *Go & Teach God's Word to the World: The History of the ALHS*, 2001, 28.

16. “Cause for Rejoicing,” *The Visitor*, July 1956, 1.

17. “Cause for Rejoicing,” *The Visitor*.

frequent appeals for assistance, especially in these earliest years of the school's existence. Many of these appeals were extremely bold, passionate pleas for support grounded in the extraordinary importance of Christian education. Take, for example, this excerpt from the April 1956 edition of *The Visitor*:

Are we afraid to sacrifice for our Lord? Or don't we appreciate what he sacrificed for us? Is it not worth a sacrifice to have our children attend a Christian school during the important high school years? If a Lutheran high school would save one soul that would otherwise be lost, would the cost be too great? What if that were the soul of your child?¹⁸

Similar appeals would become commonplace in the early years of *The Visitor*. Spiritual indifference, lack of understanding of the dangers of public education,¹⁹ and even lack of trust in the power of God's Word were presented as reasons for the slow growth of the association.²⁰ While more consistently gospel-driven messages perhaps would have been preferable, these appeals for assistance do reveal an unmistakable recognition of the importance of secondary Christian education on the part of the association and its members. As the first day of class at MLHS approached, financial stress was not about to diminish, nor would the appreciation for the Christ-centered mission of this new school.

18. "Profit or Loss!," *The Visitor*, April 1956, 1.

19. It is interesting that already in the 1950s the public school system was the target of concern from proponents of Christian education. Entries in the October 1957 and April 1958 *Visitor*'s were particularly harsh, stating, "There is no neutrality in teaching," and, "Parents should know better than to send their children to a school which by its very nature excludes and must exclude religious training from its curriculum."

20. "Slow Progress," *The Visitor*, December 1956, 2–3.

The Beginning (1956–1959)

On the morning of September 10, 1956, MLHS held its first day of classes. Fifteen students were enrolled in the freshmen class.²¹ With no full-time faculty members, six area pastors served as part-time instructors.²² The self-proclaimed purpose of this new school was “to offer sound Christian education on the high school level, founded wholly and solely on the Word of God.”²³ Fittingly, the first day of the first school year at MLHS began with an opening chapel service led by Pastor Reinhardt Koch based on Phil 3:7–14. Pastor Koch emphasized the “excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”²⁴ This service was followed by religion class. Chapel services and religion classes have remained fundamental elements of the daily routine at MLHS ever since.²⁵

During this first school year, the day began at 8:30 a.m. with a chapel service. At the Madison school building, a second-floor classroom was utilized as a chapel and was eventually furnished with an altar, pulpit, lectern, and pews that were donated in 1958 by Grace Lutheran Church, a congregation of the Norwegian Synod in rural Manitowoc. The opening chapel service

21. One of these fifteen would withdraw early in the year, leaving the enrollment at fourteen for most of the first school year.

22. Pastors Edwin Breiling of Our Savior, Two Rivers (Algebra), Waldemar Gieschen of Grace, Manitowoc (History), Frederick Knueppel of St. John’s, Manitowoc (Citizenship, Latin), Reinhardt Koch of St. John, Maribel (Religion), Armin Roekle of Bethany, Manitowoc (Science), and Kenneth Seim of St. John’s, Gibson and St. John’s, Two Creeks (English, Physical Education) taught at MLHS during the initial school year.

23. “Information about Manitowoc Lutheran High” (Manitowoc, WI: Manitowoc Lutheran High School).

24. “Historical Notes” (Manitowoc, WI: Manitowoc Lutheran High School, 1956).

25. In a document from the early years of MLHS entitled “A Religion Curriculum for the Lutheran High School,” the religion curriculum is laid out in extensive detail. The objectives were “to lead young Christians to a fuller knowledge of God and His salvation; to help them to a deeper appreciation of the blessed distinctiveness of being a member of God’s people; and to do so in such a way as to help them meet and overcome the spiritual problems of their teenage years; and to help prepare them spiritually for their future place in the Church and in the world.”

was followed by seven periods of forty-five minutes each with an hour-long lunch break beginning at noon. The day concluded at 3:25 p.m.²⁶ Tuition was \$90.

As 1956 came to a close, several issues with the Madison building arose. The south entrance was declared “no longer usable.” Therefore, “it was knocked apart and hauled away.” Additionally, the third story of the building was closed off by orders of the Manitowoc Industrial Commission.²⁷ These were among the early signs that the Madison building would not be a long-term solution for MLHS. In November 1956 the association voted to add a tenth grade for the 1957–58 school year. In time the continued growth of the school coupled with the declining condition of the Madison School would necessitate a new building.

For now, a new building would have to wait, but MLHS did soon have its first principal. In December 1956, Pastor Kenneth Seim of St. John’s, Gibson, and St. John’s, Two Creeks, who had been serving as a part-time instructor at MLHS, accepted a call to become the school’s first full-time teacher and principal. He began his service in this capacity in January 1957.²⁸ In his introductory article written in *The Visitor*, Seim expressed his theory of education at MLHS. While English, history, mathematics, and other such courses have great value, Seim wrote that “the highest object of education must be to teach the student that he is a lost creature, saved by the blood of Jesus. For this reason we have founded a Lutheran High School in our area—a Christian school where all instruction is permeated by the Gospel of Christ.”²⁹ Seim himself was described as “a sincere and consecrated man who loves the students and is deeply concerned

26. “Daily Class Schedule” (Manitowoc, WI: Manitowoc Lutheran High School, 1956).

27. “Thank You!,” *The Visitor*, December 1956, 2.

28. Upon Pastor Seim becoming a full-time faculty member, Pastors Koch and Roekle appear to have stepped away from their part-time positions at MLHS.

29. “Your Lutheran High School,” *The Visitor*, April 1957, 1.

about their spiritual as well as their physical welfare.”³⁰ In addition to Principal Seim, the faculty continued to grow. Fred Manthey was installed as the second full-time teacher in September 1957, while Mr. Elwood Lutze and Pastor Alvin Spaude joined the faculty as full-time teachers in September 1958. By the fall of 1958, with sophomore and junior classes having been added, enrollment reached 65 students.

It was during the 1958–59 school year that the *Lancer* was officially chosen as the nickname for the school’s athletic teams. *The Visitor* provided this explanation in its introduction of the nickname: “A Lancer was a soldier, so the name was chosen because the Christian students at MLHS are soldiers of the cross, always ready to fight sin and Satan with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”³¹

In the fall of 1959, MLHS officially became a four-year high school with the addition of a senior class. Enrollment had now reached 105, and MLHS added its fifth full-time teacher, as Mr. Heine Schnitker joined the faculty. In December 1959 MLHS held its first Christmas concert. The concert was presented at several area WELS churches throughout December, a practice that would continue until the construction of a new school. Holding Christmas concerts in local congregations was one of several ways that MLHS helped build a connection between the high school and those congregations. It also highlighted the fact that the existing facilities lacked a large gathering space or auditorium that would be adequate for hosting such a concert. Not long after this first Christmas concert, school leaders entered formal discussions about

30. “A Day at our M.L.H.S.,” *The Visitor*, April 1957, 3.

31. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Rooted & Growing in Christ Since 1956: 50th Anniversary Commemorative History* (Manitowoc, WI: Manitowoc Lutheran High School, 2006)

pursuing a new facility that would eventually lead to MLHS purchasing land and building a school at its current location on the corner of Waldo Boulevard and Rapids Road.

In the meantime, many happy memories were made, many important life lessons were learned, and many people gave of their time and money to support the ministry of MLHS during its time at the old Madison school building.

A discussion with MLHS alumni³² from some of these earliest classes reveals a small, close-knit school: “We were kind of like a big family.”³³ These alumni recalled the tight quarters at the Madison school building: the only restrooms were in the basement, and there was no cafeteria, library, or gymnasium. They remember how teachers maintained high standards in the classroom and that students had a high level of respect for all of them. They also noted that they traveled off campus quite often. Field trips were common.³⁴ Visits to a nearby library for books and to local parks for physical education classes were necessary. When basketball was offered as the first athletic extracurricular activity, beginning in the 1959–60 school year, practices and games had to be held at the Manitowoc Vocational School or First German Lutheran School. Later, the baseball team practiced at Red Arrow Park, and the football team practiced on a nearby city property.³⁵ Choir and band practices could be held at the Madison school building. Mr. Manthey directed the choir, and Mr. Schnitker directed the band. The alumni mentioned that

32. As part of the research for this project, the author conducted a joint interview with Julie Busse (Class of 1960), Marilyn Anklam (Class of 1961), Paul Roekle (Class of 1962), Barbara Thorington (Class of 1963), and Carole Waack (Class of 1963).

33. Marilyn Anklam, interview by author, October 13, 2025.

34. Field trips specifically mentioned were trips to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, WI, the Bethesda Home in Watertown, WI, and to local churches of different denominations as part of their religion classes.

35. Baseball was first offered in the spring of 1960. Football’s first season came in the fall of 1962.

popular activities for students included bowling, roller skating, horseback riding, and the annual Junior/Senior banquet.

From the very beginning, many memories were made, but most significantly, many lessons were learned. Students felt thoroughly equipped for the vocations of their adult lives, and students recognized the Christ-centered focus of the school. Speaking on behalf of several classmates, one alumna said, “We all got together, and we all agreed that [attending MLHS] was one of the best things that we could have ever done, and we are thankful that our parents were that concerned with a Christian education and building a foundation of faith and God in our lives.”³⁶ Another said, “I think it set the tone for your faith life for the rest of your life. Those are really the important years.”³⁷

Because of the importance of this mission, so many people, from the very beginning of MLHS’s existence, have demonstrated selfless dedication and service in support of the school. Just one of many such examples from these early years is that of Mr. Elwood Lutze, who had joined the faculty full-time in 1958 and continued teaching at MLHS until 1993. For some time in these early days of MLHS, Mr. Lutze drove a school bus into rural areas to pick up students early in the morning who otherwise could not travel into town for school. After teaching a full schedule during the day, he drove those students back home in the school bus at the end of the day.³⁸ Other logistical issues involved in simply getting to school were solved in similarly creative ways. One student recalls waking up at 5:30 a.m. to ride to work with her father, then

36. Marilyn Anklam, interview by author, October 13, 2025.

37. Barbara Thorington, interview by author, October 13, 2025.

38. Barbara Thorington, interview by author, October 13, 2025.

walking to school from there.³⁹ Others who lived in town walked distances of multiple miles to get to school.⁴⁰ A few who lived further out of town needed hosts willing to provide housing during the week.

One notable support group for the school that was formed in these early years was the Ladies Guild. This group, first organized in 1957, was open to any women from area congregations with an interest in MLHS. Regular meetings and banquets were held, which often included entertainment from student groups and an address by an MLHS teacher or guest speaker. Through the years, the Ladies Guild donated many items to the school. Many of the ladies also gave of their time to volunteer at school events. For some time, the Ladies Guild also coordinated the school's hot lunch program. In a booklet composed in 1981 for MLHS's twenty-fifth anniversary, the work of the Ladies Guild was given great respect:

We could not complete a history of the school without making mention of the Manitowoc Lutheran High School Ladies Guild. From the very beginning there has been a group of dedicated ladies willing to help the school in various ways. They have sponsored worthwhile projects which could not be funded by the budget. They have given of their time and energy to help with the cleaning of the school and the serving of meals and refreshments at school functions. They have encouraged support of the school through educational programs at their meetings.⁴¹

The tradition of holding a Spring Rally Day also began in these years, with the first recorded Rally Day occurring in April 1962. The Hamilton Community House in Two Rivers was the home of many of these rallies until MLHS had a facility of its own that was capable of hosting. Initially these events included a banquet with entertainment and guest speakers. Over the years, these events would grow to include live and silent auctions, choir performances, and

39. Julie Busse, interview by author, October 13, 2025.

40. Paul Roekle, interview by author, October 13, 2025.

41. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Twenty-Fifth Anniversary History*, 22–23.

more, while also being known as the Spring Rally, Sunday Showcase, and, most recently, the Lancer Gala. At these rallies, supporters of MLHS and its mission have given millions of dollars in support of the school. An appreciation for the Christ-centered focus of MLHS has been present among students and supporters of MLHS from the very beginning.

A New Building (1960–1967)

In January 1960, the MLHS Association appointed a site-planning committee to investigate potential sites on which to build a new school. This committee was to adopt a “look-toward-the-future” approach anticipating continued growth.⁴² It considered and prioritized location and searched for an accessible plot of land near major roadways.⁴³ Eventually, land in the northwest corner of Manitowoc was targeted. This effort was accompanied by pleas for increased gifts to the school; school deficits and debt were increasing, leaving the treasurer struggling to pay teacher salaries. The reality of building and expansion efforts occurring alongside times of financial difficulty at MLHS would not be unusual.

As the search for a suitable property commenced, MLHS graduated its first class, which was referred to as the “Pioneer class,” on June 12, 1960, in a service at Bethany in Manitowoc. Seventeen students graduated. Principal Seim preached the sermon, and the MLHS chorus sang at the service. Pastor Armin Roekle, as chairman of the association board, presented the diplomas to the graduates. One of those first graduates, Eugene Stuebs, reflected on his time at MLHS with these words, printed in the June 1960 edition of *The Visitor*:

42. Enrollment had reached 118 for the 1960–61 school. MLHS’s enrollment would increase each year from its founding until the 1973–74 school year.

43. “A Forward Look,” *The Visitor*, March 1960, 3–4.

I am most thankful to all who made a Lutheran High School education available for me. To my parents, my teachers, and all the members of the congregations who worked and prayed and contributed to keep MLHS going, I am most thankful. May the Lord bless them all for their labors. It is my prayer that my classmates and I will never forget the blessings we have received at our Lutheran High School.⁴⁴

The summer of 1960 brought a new principal to MLHS. Pastor Loren Schaller, who had been serving at Fox Valley Lutheran High School, accepted a call to serve as MLHS's second principal. Pastor Seim, the previous principal, remained on the MLHS faculty as a teacher and coach for the 1960–61 school year before accepting a call to a WELS mission endeavor in Hong Kong.⁴⁵

The fall of 1960 brought thirty-three new freshmen into the school, continuing a pattern of steady increases in enrollment. At a meeting of the association on November 13, 1960, members took a significant step in their pursuit of a new school building. They voted to proceed with the purchase of the so-called "Sundt property," a seven-and-a-half-acre property, which was owned by sisters Minnie and Emma Sundt and located at the corner of Waldo Boulevard and Rapids Road. It had been offered to the association at a price that was described as "a gift."⁴⁶ There was some debate over whether the Sundt property was of a sufficient size for the needs of the high school, but the association members still voted in favor of the purchase, which was officially completed in May 1961.⁴⁷ Soon after this purchase, the association inquired about the adjacent fifteen-acre Fricke property.⁴⁸ Mr. Fricke, the property's owner, quoted a price of \$2500

44. Eugene Stuebs, "The Value of a Lutheran High School Education," *The Visitor*, June 1960, 4.

45. Brick, Habeck, Liese, Lutze, and Lutze, *Fortieth Anniversary History*, 6.

46. Brick, Habeck, Liese, Lutze, and Lutze, *Fortieth Anniversary History*, 6.

47. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Twenty-Fifth Anniversary History*, 13.

48. See Appendix 2 for diagram of the properties and their approximate boundaries.

per acre, a price that was considered too steep. However, within the next year Mr. Fricke passed away, and the entire fifteen acres became available for \$9500.⁴⁹ On November 11, 1962, the association officially voted to commit to purchasing the Fricke property at that price⁵⁰ with the official purchase occurring on April 1, 1963.⁵¹ Work now could begin on raising funds for the construction of a new school on this land.

As the pursuit of a new school building continued, other developments at MLHS also took place. In the fall of 1961, Mr. Richard Winter⁵² and Miss Delores Lauersdorf joined the faculty as the sixth and seventh full-time teachers. Upon the departure of Miss Lauersdorf, Miss Lorraine Liese joined the faculty in 1965.⁵³ Beginning in the fall of 1962, *The Visitor* periodical newsletter was renamed *The Clarion*, which retained a similar format and continued with the goal of informing and inspiring supporters of MLHS with a report of what was happening at the school.⁵⁴

An especially important development was the move from an association to a federation. MLHS started as an association of individuals that were interested in providing a secondary Christian education in the Manitowoc area. As MLHS continued to grow, association members

49. "News Flash," *The Clarion*, 1962 Vol. I No. 2, 2.

50. "Hi-Lights of the Association Meeting," *The Clarion*, 1962 Vol. I No. 3, 2.

51. "Land Purchase," *The Clarion*, April 1963, 3.

52. Mr. Winter served as teacher at MLHS from 1961–1998. A graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, WI, Mr. Winter decided to pursue the teaching ministry rather than the pastoral ministry. In addition to his teaching duties at MLHS, Mr. Winter served as athletic director (1961–1991), boys' basketball coach (1961–1987), baseball coach (1962–1986), and football coach (1963–1968). He was inducted into the Lakeshore All Sports Hall of Fame in 1992. (Source: April 1992 *Clarion*)

53. Miss Liese taught at MLHS from 1965 until her retirement in 1986.

54. "The Clarion Sound," *The Clarion*, 1962 Vol. I No. 1, 1. (*The Clarion* would remain in print until its final edition in May 2005. At that time, a less frequently published *Lancer Legends* periodical replaced *The Clarion*. Today, the Federation's newsletter is entitled *The Shield*.)

recognized that a federation of congregations would provide more stable support for the school; congregations would remain committed even as individuals came and went.⁵⁵ The greater borrowing power a federation would supply was especially appealing at this time when MLHS was working on a new construction project. Another benefit was that a federation structure would give congregations a greater degree of responsibility and oversight in the Christian education of their youth. In 1962 discussions regarding a move to a federation began. A proposed constitution was composed, and the association appointed a twenty-man committee to “concern itself with the constitution and federation matter.”⁵⁶ Eventually, as outreach efforts at local congregations began, it was agreed that a federation would form when thirteen or more congregations and five thousand or more communicant members had voted to join. These efforts were aided by the support of the local pastoral conference.⁵⁷ A pamphlet that was distributed at area congregations summarized the recruitment pitch as it sought to answer this question: “Why an association of congregations rather than an association of individuals?”:

The preaching and teaching of the Word is properly the concern of the entire Christian congregation. Until now the operation of our Lutheran High School has been managed by a small group representing less than 5% of the voting membership of our Manitowoc Conference. While it would have been desirable for the congregations to have assumed this responsibility from the very beginning, the fact that our Lutheran High School is in a critical phase of its development makes it urgent that the congregations *now* assume that privilege which is rightfully theirs.⁵⁸

55. Raising the required funds to meet the operating budget was a chronic issue in the early years of MLHS.

56. “Association News,” *The Clarion*, February 1963, 3.

57. *The Clarion*, January 1967, 2.

58. “What do you mean...Manitowoc Conference Lutheran High School Federation?,” Manitowoc, WI: Manitowoc Lutheran High School, 2.

Efforts toward a federation slowly progressed until the required number of congregations had joined. On February 11, 1968, the association formally declared its intention to become a federation. A Board of Control was elected, and formal control of the school was handed over to the federation on January 12, 1969.⁵⁹ Today, the MLHS Federation continues to govern and operate the school. As of 2025, the federation numbers twenty-three member congregations, along with six advisory congregations.⁶⁰

The move to a federation occurred against the backdrop of the construction of a new school building. A building fund was formally established in November 1963. In early 1964, Perc Brandt & Son of Manitowoc was selected as the architectural firm for the new school building, and a building committee was formed.⁶¹ In November 1964, the association approved the building committee's recommendation for a two-story building and gymnasium.⁶²

This was welcome progress, as the need for a new building was becoming dire. The Madison school building was getting cramped and continuing to show its age. In 1964–65 enrollment reached 194 students in a building with eight usable classrooms that was now over ninety years old. The February 1965 *Clarion* reflected the feelings of the school's administrators: "We wonder how will next year's enrollment fit inside these ancient walls? How will we schedule classes so that, now that the Association has granted us a ninth teacher, some classes

59. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Twenty-Fifth Anniversary History*, 19.

60. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, accessed December 3, 2025, <https://www.mlhslancers.org/federation>.

61. Brick, Habeck, Liese, Lutze, and Lutze, *Fortieth Anniversary History*, 7.

62. Some suggested building the new school without the gymnasium and adding it later only when more funds became available. Ultimately, the decision was made to build the gymnasium initially. Having a suitable space for chapel services, physical education classes, campus assemblies, athletic events, graduations, and other large events was considered one of the primary benefits of constructing a new school building, so a gymnasium was considered necessary.

need not be held in the basement?”⁶³ A separate informational booklet presenting the proposal for a new school building detailed some specific challenges in the existing facility:

It is impossible for us to continue indefinitely without an assembly room capable of handling the entire student body. Guest speakers, lectures, films, etc. have to be discouraged, simply because it now must be done in sections and too much class time would be lost. Any kind of wholesome student assembly or meeting suffers a like fate. It is certainly discouraging both to teacher and student to convert a classroom every time the band or choir rehearses. To continue year after year without a school library can only lower our standards. At present one room already is forced to double as a study hall and teaching station at the same time. Physical education, required by the state, is severely handicapped by the present lack of facilities. These needs are most urgent. Their solution should be found now, not in a few years or so.⁶⁴

As association members recognized the extreme need for a new building, donations to the building fund reached about \$190,000 of the desired \$250,000 by the end of the 1964-65 school year.⁶⁵ By the fall of 1965, the association felt ready to move forward. Bids for construction were collected in October. Then, on November 14, 1965, after significant discussion over whether there were sufficient funds on hand at the time, the association officially voted to build the new school. The total cost of construction would be \$582,505, of which \$300,000 was borrowed from Two Rivers Savings and Loan.⁶⁶ On January 9, 1966, a groundbreaking ceremony was held on an “unseasonably mild”⁶⁷ day with over 400 people in attendance. Pastor Rudolf Otto, association chairman, presented a devotion based on Gen 28:16–17, while the High School Concert Choir

63. *The Clarion*, February 1965, 1.

64. “Proposed Building: A Gift of Love for Our Youth,” Manitowoc, WI: Manitowoc Lutheran High School, 2.

65. “Building Fund Report,” *The Clarion*, June 1965, 3.

66. The association board had originally proposed to move forward with construction only when 75% of needed funds had been raised. At this November 1965 meeting, that proposal was set aside, even though less than half of the required funds were on hand. For the small school to be able to secure this loan from Two Rivers Savings and Loan, it has been recounted that six association families raised their personal wealth and property as collateral.

67. “The Spade Has Been Sunk,” *The Clarion*, January 1966, 1.

sang an “appropriate selection.”⁶⁸ While this was a festive day, it was clear that significant commitment would be required in the coming years to ensure the continued success of MLHS. Reflecting on the leap of faith that had been taken in this new building project, the January 1966 *Clarion* reported:

It is hardly a secret that there were conflicting views among Association members as to what should be done in the new building, its financing, and the time for construction. However, it is also an axiom that it’s impossible to please everyone. Finally, one has to have the confidence that the various committees did the very best they could. The dedication of time and talents by many of these men approaches the sacrificial! We believe we will have a fine, functional school plant that can be paid for by our area Lutherans.⁶⁹

Work on the new building progressed quickly. By the end of the summer of 1966, the structure had been mostly completed but was not yet ready to be occupied.⁷⁰ Throughout the fall, interior work, including painting, ceiling tile installation, and heating system installation, was completed.⁷¹ The 194 students who had crammed into the Madison School during the first semester were ready to move into the new MLHS school building for the first day of their second semester on January 4, 1967.⁷² An open house was hosted in the new building on Easter Sunday, March 26, 1967. The building was officially dedicated in a worship service on April 23, 1967, held in the new gymnasium, with nearly 2000 in attendance.⁷³

68. “The Spade Has Been Sunk,” 1.

69. “The Spade Has Been Sunk,” 1–2.

70. *The Clarion*, August 1966, 2.

71. Much of this work was done by many dedicated volunteers, as reported in the November 1966 *Clarion*: “We are thankful for the dedicated, donated labor of so many high school supporters.” Throughout 1967 further volunteer work was needed to complete much of the landscaping work.

72. See Appendix 3 for pictures from the construction of the new school building.

73. See Appendix 4 for a letter sent to MLHS from WELS president Oscar Naumann upon this occasion.

A new building meant many positive changes: sufficient space for large assemblies, physical education classes, industrial arts classes, and science labs, among others. Yet one thing would not change: “Interwoven into [MLHS’s] entire curriculum is the saving gospel of Jesus Christ, the only power unto salvation, the very essence of all wisdom.”⁷⁴ This new school building would further enable MLHS to prepare its growing number of students to serve their Savior for many years to come.⁷⁵

74. “At the Expense of Academic Preparation?,” *The Clarion*, February 1967, 2.

75. After serving as the home of MLHS for 10.5 years, the old Madison School building was demolished in the fall of 1967. The building was located on a section of what is today Union Park in Manitowoc.

A PERIOD OF GROWTH AND STABILITY

A Growing School (1967–1979)

When MLHS entered its new school building in January 1967, enrollment stood at just under 200 students. By the middle of the next decade, enrollment would surge to well over 300. This rapid growth in enrollment necessitated growth in other areas, too, including in the faculty, academic and extracurricular offerings, the property, and the school building itself, culminating in a major expansion effort that would come at the end of the 1970s.

MLHS was quick to put its new facilities to use as it hosted a growing number of events on its new campus. In the spring of 1967, MLHS hosted the Lutheran Invitational Tournament, a basketball tournament featuring several other WELS high schools.⁷⁶ Also hosted that spring was the Lutheran Elementary Invitational Basketball Tournament, which involved local WELS elementary schools.⁷⁷ Another event involving Lutheran elementary school students that could now be hosted at the new school was Visiting Day. Visiting Day was first held in April 1966. It

76. A curious episode related to this tournament involves the basketball standards, which were not originally installed. As the tournament approached, word arrived that the standards would not arrive in time to be installed for the tournament; they would be stuck for a few days in Chicago in a warehouse due to a snowstorm. Fred Cowling of Two Rivers' Hamilton Industries is credited with arranging for a home-bound semi to pick up the standards and deliver them ahead of schedule. Just in time for the tournament the standards were delivered and installed. Additionally, bleachers had not yet been installed in the gymnasium and needed to be rented for the tournament. (Brick, Habeck, Liese, Lutze, and Lutze, *Fortieth Anniversary History*, 9.)

77. A similar tournament continues today as the Lakeshore Lutheran League basketball tournament. This is one of several ways that MLHS encourages local WELS elementary school students to visit the campus, an important facet of recruitment for the school.

involved inviting 8th grade students from area WELS elementary schools for a visit to the MLHS campus to tour the facility, meet teachers and students, and enjoy fun activities. In April 1967, this event could be hosted at the new school for the first time. In the spring of 1975, Visiting Day was renamed “Lancer for a Day,” a major recruitment event that is still held annually at MLHS.⁷⁸ Also for the first time, graduation could be held on campus rather than in an area congregation. On June 9, 1967, forty-three seniors graduated from MLHS in the first graduation service held in the new gymnasium. During the 1967–68 school year more events were hosted at MLHS, including the WELS high school band festival, a Milwaukee Lutheran Chorale concert directed by Kurt Eggert, and the Northern Wisconsin District Convention. Major events of this kind continued to be hosted at MLHS in the years that followed.

Even with the school building complete and functional, much work still had to be done to retire the debt incurred by the building project. One method employed by MLHS for paying the debt owed to Two Rivers Savings and Loan was to ask federation members to loan their own money to the school. A modest interest rate was offered, but these member loans were much more favorable for MLHS compared to the loan with Two Rivers Savings and Loan. Progress was slow, but the loan owed to Two Rivers Savings and Loan was officially paid in full in the summer of 1975.⁷⁹

In December 1967 MLHS acquired the final portion of the Sundt property, which comprised the homestead. The barn was razed, while the house was remodeled and used as the

78. Through the years, Lancer for a Day has undergone various changes. At times it has been held on a day when classes are cancelled for high school students; at other times, it has been held on a day when high school class is in session. At times, all 8th grade students visited on the same day; at other times, smaller groups of schools visited on several different days. Originally it was held in April; now it typically occurs in January. Since the 1970s it has been held on a day with a home basketball game scheduled in the evening.

79. “Federation Meeting Highlights,” *The Clarion*, September 1975, 2. (It is unclear exactly when all member loans were repaid.)

principal's residence.⁸⁰ In the summer of 1976, the original house was razed, and a new principal's residence was built.⁸¹ Other property growth included the purchase of the Weyer property for \$23,000 in April 1974.⁸² This property is located northwest of the school building, between Rapids Road and the western leg of Lancer Circle.⁸³ To fund the purchase of the Weyer property, the federation decided to sell property it owned that was located north of the football field and Wildwood Drive. That property was sold for \$20,000.⁸⁴ At the northwest corner of the Weyer property, a new school sign was installed; Mr. Dan Kretsch did the masonry work, while MLHS teacher Mr. Elwood Lutze carved the sign itself. Special underground wiring was installed to light the sign.⁸⁵ In 1975, Wildwood Drive and Lancer Circle were paved. Inside the school, various areas of the basement were developed into usable educational space. Additional classroom equipment, such as desks, tables, chairs, and science equipment, was acquired.⁸⁶ In 1976 additional bleachers were installed on the west side of the gymnasium.⁸⁷ However, increasing strain on these existing facilities would soon necessitate an expansion project.

80. Brick, Habeck, Liese, Lutze, and Lutze, *Fortieth Anniversary History*, 9.

81. Principal Worgull and his family moved in on August 17, 1976. Today, this building serves as housing for international students.

82. "Federation Hi-Lites," *The Clarion*, September 1974, 2.

83. This area is used primarily as a soccer field and for physical education classes today.

84. "Federation Hi-Lites," *The Clarion*, September 1974, 2.

85. "New School Sign," *The Clarion*, December 1974, 1. (See Appendix 5 for a picture of this sign.)

86. Often, these items were purchased second-hand from local schools at a discounted rate or were accepted from them as donations.

87. "New Bleachers," *The Clarion*, May 1976, 2. (Before this, bleachers had only been located on the east side of the gym.)

Another area of growth during these years was in extracurricular offerings at MLHS. The Lancer Singers began in the fall of 1969 as a “type of swing choir, made up of twenty seniors, which also sang for services in area churches when invited.”⁸⁸ This complemented already-existing Concert, Girls, Sophomore, and Freshman Choirs. A grade school band program was first started in the fall of 1970 with 37 students.⁸⁹ This initial effort did not last long, but the program was restarted in the fall of 1977. This time, about 100 students from area Lutheran elementary schools joined.⁹⁰ The grade school band program continues today as the Junior Lancer Band. Drama opportunities also expanded at this time. Until the 1974–75 school year, the only drama production at MLHS was the annual Senior Class Play. Starting that school year, though, each class produced its own play. By 1976–77, a drama club had formed, and the first all school musical, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown,” was held in 1978–79.⁹¹ During the 1979–80 school year, MLHS students were first given the opportunity to participate in the Wisconsin School Music Association (WSMA) solo and ensemble contest.⁹²

Athletic opportunities also expanded. Girls were able to participate in interscholastic athletics for the first time in 1971–72, as girls’ basketball and track teams began competition. Volleyball started in 1973–74.⁹³ In what was a sign of things to come, the MLHS volleyball

88. Brick, Habeck, Liese, Lutze, and Lutze, *Fortieth Anniversary History*, 24.

89. Robert Sonntag, “Grade School Band Program,” *The Clarion*, December 1970, 3.

90. “New Faculty Member at MLHS,” *The Clarion*, September 1977, 1.

91. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Excalibar* (Manitowoc, WI: Manitowoc Lutheran High School, 1979), 23.

92. Brick, Habeck, Liese, Lutze, and Lutze, *Fortieth Anniversary History*, 24.

93. Brick, Habeck, Liese, Lutze, and Lutze, *Fortieth Anniversary History*, 20.

program found success quickly, winning a conference championship in 1977.⁹⁴ Boys continued to have athletic opportunities in football, basketball, and baseball,⁹⁵ and many of these teams excelled in the mid-1970s. The 1975 football season was particularly successful, as MLHS went undefeated and unscored upon in conference play,⁹⁶ winning the first of four consecutive conference championships.⁹⁷ The basketball team won a conference championship in 1974, while the baseball team won their conference in 1975.⁹⁸ In January 1977, MLHS was officially accepted as a member of the Wisconsin Independent Schools Athletic Association (WISAA), allowing its athletic teams to compete with other private schools on a statewide stage.⁹⁹

During these years of growth, several long-time teachers joined the faculty, including Mr. Robert Sonntag in the fall of 1969,¹⁰⁰ and Mr. Richard Ash¹⁰¹ and Mr. Frederic Heiderich¹⁰² in the fall of 1970. In the fall of 1971, Pastor Paul Borchardt joined the faculty as a teacher and the school's first Guidance Counselor.¹⁰³ Two pastors, H. Paul Bauer in 1971 and Philip Janke in

94. Gymnasium championship banner, Manitowoc Lutheran High School, Manitowoc, WI.

95. Wrestling would be added as a boys' varsity sport in 1980–81. Cross country would not become a varsity sport until 1996–97, although it was offered briefly in the early 1960s.

96. "A Word from Coach Heiderich," *The Clarion*, November 1975, 1.

97. Gymnasium championship banner, Manitowoc Lutheran High School, Manitowoc, WI.

98. Gymnasium championship banner, Manitowoc Lutheran High School, Manitowoc, WI.

99. "Athletics," *The Clarion*, January 1977, 3.

100. Mr. Sonntag served as the head of the music department for much of his time at MLHS. He would retire from teaching in 2005.

101. Mr. Ash taught at MLHS until 1999, when he accepted a call to serve as professor at Martin Luther College in New Ulm, MN.

102. Mr. Heiderich served as teacher and coach at MLHS until his retirement in 2004. He continued to coach track in his retirement.

103. Pastor Borchardt would serve as MLHS Guidance Counselor until the fall of 1983. He continued to teach at MLHS until his retirement in 1995.

1972, arrived to teach English and religion courses. In 1975, Miss Joyce Diels arrived at MLHS to teach math and physical education.¹⁰⁴

In the summer of 1975, a sudden change of administration came to MLHS. Principal Schaller found it necessary to resign his position for personal reasons. Pastor Glenn Unke announced this news to the MLHS Federation in the following letter:

At the last meeting of the Board of Control on Monday, July 21, a letter from Pastor Loren Schaller informed the Board that with deep regret, for personal reasons, he was tendering his resignation as Principal and Instructor, effective immediately. With heavy hearts the Board accepted his resignation, mindful of his fifteen years of faithful service at MLHS.¹⁰⁵

Vice principal Elwood Lutze immediately became the acting principal until a new principal could be called, while Pastor Keith Haag of Grace in Manitowoc filled in as an instructor.¹⁰⁶ It was a welcome blessing that the first call for a new principal was accepted by Pastor David Worgull of Menasha, WI. He was installed as principal on November 2, 1975, during the area Reformation service.¹⁰⁷

Enrollment dropped slightly, to the upper 200s, in the mid-1970s but quickly bounced back to over 300 by the end of the decade. Several more long-time teachers joined the faculty at the end of the 1970s. Mr. Dennis Steinbrenner and Miss Karen Wilsman joined the faculty in

104. Miss Diels taught at MLHS from 1975–1994, when she accepted a call to Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School in New Ulm, MN.

105. Glenn Unke, “An Important Announcement,” *The Clarion*, July–August 1975, 2. (Pastor Schaller continued his ministry at Luther High in Onalaska, WI, then at Northwestern Publishing House, and finally at a WELS mission congregation in Tucson, AZ until his retirement from full-time ministry in 1987. (“Rev. Loren A. Schaller Obituary,” *Manitowoc Herald Times Reporter*, May 12, 2019.))

106. “During the Vacancy,” *The Clarion*, October 1975, 3–4.

107. “Reformation–Installation,” *The Clarion*, October 1975, 1.

1978.¹⁰⁸ Mr. Jim Carolfi accepted a call to MLHS in 1979.¹⁰⁹ After this decade of rapid growth at MLHS, the existing school building was nearing capacity little more than a decade after opening. With a record class of ninety-five freshmen enrolled at MLHS in the fall of 1977,¹¹⁰ and with several additional large classes projected in the years ahead, the federation would be forced to act quickly to expand the school's capacity.

Expansion (1978–1981)

The MLHS Federation's first action in the expansion effort was the appointment of a six-man planning committee at its May 21, 1978, meeting. This committee was tasked with "studying the future use and needs of the property."¹¹¹ By the end of 1978, the planning committee had plans drawn by an architect for a possible addition to the existing building. Further discussion followed at federation meetings early in 1979, with building and finance committees established on February 18, 1979.¹¹² The January–February 1979 edition of *The Clarion* outlines the rationale for this expansion effort and the urgency surrounding it:

Our student body right now has two classes that are rather small (juniors and seniors) and two that are the largest in our history (freshmen and sophomores). This trend towards classes of 90 or more students promises to continue, for which we thank our gracious God. As you can easily see, in another two years, therefore, we could have an enrollment

108. Mr. Steinbrenner served as teacher and administrator at MLHS from 1978–2013. Miss Wilsmann became the first alumnus to join the faculty in a full-time capacity. She served as teacher and coach at MLHS from 1978–2020.

109. Mr. Carolfi served as mathematics teacher and coach at MLHS from 1979 until his retirement in 2017.

110. "Increased Enrollment," *The Clarion*, September 1977, 2.

111. "Federation Meeting," *The Clarion*, June–July 1978, 2.

112. "Regarding Expansion," *The Clarion*, March 1979, 2.

well over what our present facilities were designed to accommodate, especially in the laboratory classrooms, library, and cafeteria areas.¹¹³

Additionally, better locker room facilities for athletics and more room for the music department were mentioned as needs to be addressed in this expansion effort.

In the midst of a financial situation described as “not particularly pleasant,”¹¹⁴ with \$30,000 needing to be borrowed in the fall of 1979 just to meet current operating expenses, the federation nonetheless continued moving forward with expansion. It retained Gene Maloney and Associates as architect for the project and received an estimated cost of \$640,000.¹¹⁵ In the early months of 1980, information about the project was presented at area WELS congregations; an open house was held at MLHS on February 10, 1980, as a further opportunity to present the need for expansion and what that expansion might look like.¹¹⁶ At the federation meeting on February 17, 1980, the expansion project was officially approved by a vote of sixty-five to thirty-one.¹¹⁷ Included in the project were remodeling and repurposing efforts in several existing portions of the school. On May 12, 1980, a contract was signed with Hoffman Brothers Construction of Two Rivers to be the project’s general contractor at a cost of \$589,808, about \$50,000 under the initial estimate.¹¹⁸ A week later, excavation began. The entire project was hoped to be finished by the end of 1980, while the remodeling portion of the work was scheduled to be completed by the beginning of the fall semester.

113. “Some Thoughts on Expansion,” *The Clarion*, January–February 1979, 1.

114. “Federation Meeting Notes and Comments,” *The Clarion*, September 1979, 3.

115. “Expansion Plans,” *The Clarion*, December 1979, 2.

116. Approximately 1000 people attended this open house. (“Other Highlights from the Federation Meeting,” *The Clarion*, March 1980, 2.)

117. “Expansion Program Gets the Green Light,” *The Clarion*, March 1980, 1.

118. “Expansion Update,” *The Clarion*, June 1980, 4.

By the end of the summer, much of the remodeling work was indeed completed. Among this work was the installation of new windows, doorways, and plumbing. Several walls were removed and rebuilt to adjust room sizes. The existing lobby area was expanded, and a coat room was added to it. The old school office area, which had been located adjacent to the lobby, was repurposed as a faculty workroom. The existing men's and women's locker room areas were expanded. A visitors' dressing room was also added in what had previously been the kitchen. On the second floor, existing classroom space was remodeled into a large study hall room next to the library, and a new choral music room was added above the locker room addition. The most significant work happened in the basement. The cafeteria and kitchen, originally located on the first floor, were relocated to larger remodeled areas of the basement.¹¹⁹ New restrooms were also added in the basement. Because of the study hall addition on the second floor, the old basement study hall room could be repurposed into a wrestling room for the soon-to-be-established wrestling program.¹²⁰ In describing these remodeling efforts, an informational pamphlet distributed at this project's completion remarked, "The end result is almost like having a completely new school."¹²¹ The August 1980 *Clarion* said: "Areas of the 'old' building are practically unrecognizable."¹²² From these descriptions, it seems accurate to say that the core of the MLHS school building that exists today took shape during this extensive remodeling and expansion project of 1980.

119. The original cafeteria was repurposed into first floor classroom space, approximately located in what is now the Chemistry classroom and lab.

120. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, "Dedication of Expanded Facilities" (Manitowoc, WI: Manitowoc Lutheran High School) February 1, 1981.

121. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, "Dedication of Expanded Facilities."

122. "The Project," *The Clarion*, August 1980, 1.

Even with this portion of the work completed, some minor inconveniences existed for students and teachers in the fall of 1980, with make-shift classrooms needing to be employed.¹²³ The actual expansion work continued throughout the fall. This work involved the previously described locker room and choir areas that were extended westward. The main phase of the expansion work, though, was the so-called “West Wing” of the building. The addition included an elevator, a new office complex, and two first-floor classrooms. On the second floor, several additional classrooms and an AV storage room were added. The basement was also extended westward; the expanded basement area included additional room for the graphic arts department and print shop, while also providing designated space for what would eventually become an industrial arts area.¹²⁴

When students returned from Christmas vacation, construction was officially completed. A dedication service was held on Sunday, February 1, 1981, with almost 1000 in attendance.¹²⁵ This dedication service was marked by both joy and sorrow, as Mr. Donald Wilsmann, secretary of the MLHS Board of Control and a member of the planning committee for the dedication celebrations, had died suddenly on the previous day, January 31.¹²⁶ Through the faithful service

123. “The Project,” *The Clarion*.

124. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, “Dedication of Expanded Facilities.” (Much like with the construction of the original school building in the 1960s, member loans were employed to help fund this expansion effort. By the end of 1980, almost \$250,000 had been received in member loans (“Items from the Federation Meeting,” *The Clarion*, December 1980, 2.). The effort to retire the debt incurred from this project would continue into the 1990s.)

125. “Dedication and Open House,” *The Clarion*, March 1981, 1.

126. “Federation Meeting Highlights,” *The Clarion*, March 1981, 1; Karen Wilsmann, interview by author, October 11, 2025. (Mr. Wilsmann is another example of someone who served faithfully and with great dedication to the ministry of MLHS. In addition to his service on the Board of Control, Mr. Wilsmann’s sound system and speakers became fixtures at MLHS Spring Rallies, high school concerts, and high school athletic events. He would set up and take down this equipment many times at these various events. After his death, the Wilsmann family donated his sound system to MLHS (“Grateful Acknowledgements,” *The Clarion*, June 1981, 3.), and it was still in use at the MLHS football field into the 21st century. It has since been replaced after many years of good use.)

and dedication of Mr. Wilsmann and so many other faithful Christians and with God's gracious blessing, this expansion project was completed and has been a lasting benefit to those who teach and learn at MLHS.

Later that spring, on May 25, 1981, the MLHS community was saddened by another loss, the sudden death of Pastor Philip Janke, who had taught at MLHS since 1972. The 1981 *Excalibar* included this note in memory of Pastor Janke: "We will remember him for his dedication, faithfulness, and cheerfulness, but above all, for his sharing with all of us the truths of God's Word and showing his joyful faith in his life."¹²⁷ On May 30, 1981, a class of 80 seniors graduated from MLHS in the first graduation service held in the newly expanded building.¹²⁸

A Season of Stability (1981–1998)

In the nearly two decades that followed the expansion effort of the late 1970s and early 1980s MLHS entered a period of relative stability. Carrying significant debt from the expansion project and with an enrollment that declined into the mid-200s for much of the 1980s, MLHS was not in a position to embark on further property development efforts. Still, MLHS continued to develop and change in other areas throughout these years. Many of these developments continue to have lasting effects at MLHS.

One such area of development was technology. During the 1982–83 school year, MLHS purchased its first computer, an Apple IIe computer, together with a printer and green monitor.

127. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Excalibar* (Manitowoc, WI: Manitowoc Lutheran High School, 1981), 108.

128. "Commencement 1981," *The Clarion*, June 1981, 1.

This equipment was designated for administration use.¹²⁹ During that same school year, MLHS established a Computer Science Department and started a Micro-Computer Fund that solicited donations toward the purchase of additional computers for student use.¹³⁰ By 1984, a computer classroom had been organized, described as MLHS’ “centralized computer laboratory,”¹³¹ and a color printer was purchased.¹³² Since then, computers and technology in the classroom have advanced rapidly, progressing to overhead projectors, VCRs and televisions, then Smartboards and mobile laptop computer carts, to personal laptop computers for every student and interactive classroom displays today.

Also during these years, interested parents and supporters formed two support groups that promote the MLHS Fine Arts and Athletics programs, respectively. The MLHS Accents was organized in 1982 to “maintain a strong interest in the various phases of [the] music department and to lend support to it.”¹³³ Today, the MLHS Accents still provides support, funding, and assistance to the MLHS Fine Arts program by supplying volunteers for major Fine Arts events and by organizing fundraising events in support of the MLHS Fine Arts program.¹³⁴ In 1990, the Friends of the Lancers group was formed to support the MLHS Athletics program.¹³⁵ Today, the Friends of the Lancers raises money for non-budgeted athletic uniforms, equipment, and more by

129. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Rooted & Growing in Christ Since 1956: 50th Anniversary Commemorative History*.

130. “From the Corner Office,” *The Clarion*, November 1982, 4.

131. “Computer Classroom,” *The Clarion*, February 1984, 2.

132. “Catch On to Computers,” *The Clarion*, July 1984, 3.

133. “‘Accents,’” *The Clarion*, December 1982–January 1983, 2.

134. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, accessed November 13, 2025, <https://www.mlhslancers.org/volunteer>.

135. “Friends of the Lancers,” *The Clarion*, March 1990, 5.

operating a concessions stand at home sporting events and through the sale of MLHS spirit wear.¹³⁶ In between the founding of these two extracurricular support groups being founded, MLHS established an endowment fund in 1986.¹³⁷ This fund was intended to provide a stable source of income for the school. Because the principal dollar amount donated is required to remain in the fund, gifts given to it multiply beyond their original value. “Only the earnings are distributed annually to support the school’s mission.”¹³⁸ In 2025, the endowment fund contained approximately \$3 million and distributed \$124,600 in earnings “to meet needs and support student success.”¹³⁹

MLHS continued to foster its relationships with area WELS elementary schools during these years. MLHS held the first “Lutheran Grade School All Academic Fair Day” on April 16, 1983. This Saturday event was intended for students from area WELS elementary schools in grades 5–8 and included a math meet, forensics meet, science fair, spelling bee, and art fair.¹⁴⁰ This day of engagement for prospective future MLHS students continues in a similar format today as the Lakeshore Lutheran Schools Academic Fair. The first recorded MLHS “Hot Shot” contest, a basketball shooting competition, for area grade school children was held in January 1990¹⁴¹ and continues on an annual basis today. These kinds of events bring grade school students onto the MLHS campus and thus serve as recruitment efforts for the school.

136. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, accessed November 13, 2025, <https://www.mlhslancers.org/volunteer>.

137. “MLHS Endowment Fund,” *The Clarion*, July 1986, 1.

138. “Endowment Fund,” *The Shield*, Fall 2025–2026, 3.

139. “Endowment Fund,” *The Shield*.

140. “Academic Fair Day,” *The Clarion*, April 1983, 1.

141. “‘Hot Shot’ Contest,” *The Clarion*, January 1990, 3.

MLHS worked in other ways, too, to build closer relationships with the local Lutheran elementary schools and congregations. In the fall of 1983, a K–12 Curriculum Committee was formed.¹⁴² This committee worked closely with local WELS elementary school principals to align and coordinate the curriculum between the elementary schools and MLHS. This committee’s vision of a unified, Christ-centered curriculum is clearly stated in the following *Clarion* article printed in December 1987:

Since orderly curriculum study has benefited our individual schools, this committee, guided by God’s Word, will strive to guide such orderly curriculum study for our schools of the area. As Christians working together, we believe that our Lutheran Elementary Schools and Lutheran High School can improve the quality of their curriculum together while guarding the individual school’s autonomy and reputation. In all we do, Jesus Christ will be the teacher, and Scripture will be the ultimate textbook.¹⁴³

This kind of formal curricular collaboration between area WELS elementary schools and MLHS continues today. In 2020, Mr. Corey Marohn became the first Lakeshore Lutheran Schools Curriculum Coordinator, a part-time administrative position established for the purpose of facilitating this kind of curricular coordination. In the spring of 2025, Mr. Marohn accepted a call to Trinity, Brillion, leaving the position vacant. There are plans to extend a call to fill this position again in the future.¹⁴⁴

Another development was the arrival of MLHS’s first international student, Ingmar Niemann of Germany, who came to MLHS in the fall of 1983.¹⁴⁵ From the arrival of this first international student through the end of the 1990s, MLHS typically hosted one or two international students per year. Beginning in the 2000s and especially the 2010s, the number of

142. Brick, Habeck, Liese, Lutze, and Lutze, *Fortieth Anniversary History*, 14.

143. “K–12 Committee,” *The Clarion*, December 1987, 6.

144. David Uhlhorn, email message to author, November 14, 2025.

145. “Foreign Exchange Student,” *The Clarion*, September 1983, 2.

international students began to increase rather quickly. A formal international program was established. MLHS recognized several benefits of hosting international students. First and foremost, the international program is a mission opportunity. International students, some of whom do not come from a Christian background, receive a Christian education at MLHS. Some of them hear about Jesus for the first time at MLHS. Some of them have come to faith and been baptized. Additionally, the international program increased the enrollment of MLHS and brought increased revenue to the school. At times of declining enrollment and financial difficulty, this extra income was greatly beneficial to MLHS's economic health.¹⁴⁶ Today, the MLHS International Program continues to operate. In a typical school year, about fifteen to twenty international students are enrolled at MLHS, a number limited primarily by housing availability.¹⁴⁷

Another positive development was the calling of a learning coordinator in 1987. This was a newly created position intended to "guide the development of the educational program for less gifted and more gifted students."¹⁴⁸ Miss Debra Heinz was the first to serve at MLHS in this capacity.¹⁴⁹ In an interview for this paper, Miss Karen Wilsmann, who served for a time as learning coordinator at MLHS, emphasizes the importance of MLHS's work over time to make itself a school "for just about everyone."¹⁵⁰ Initiating the learning coordinator position broadened

146. Dennis Steinbrenner, interview by author, October 17, 2025.

147. David Uhlhorn, interview by author, October 10, 2025.

148. "Federation Meeting Notes," *The Clarion*, March 1987, 2.

149. Brick, Habeck, Liese, Lutze, and Lutze, *Fortieth Anniversary History*, 15.

150. Karen Wilsmann, interview by author, October 11, 2025.

the number of students MLHS was able to serve and helped provide struggling students with an advocate and mentor who would help them succeed at MLHS.¹⁵¹

Another effort to expand the ways that MLHS could equip students for meaningful post-graduation success was the establishment of the Student to Work program in 1997. This program allowed students to spend part of the school day working at an area business and to develop their skills in that occupation. Today, this is known as the Youth Apprenticeship program and is open to junior and senior students.¹⁵² In a typical year, about twenty students are accepted into this program.¹⁵³

MLHS presently continues its efforts to prepare its students for a wide variety of life and career callings. For those planning to attend a college or university, dual credit and Advanced Placement (AP) courses are offered, both in person and online. A wide variety of online courses are available to students through Amazing Grace Virtual Academy. In addition to the Youth Apprenticeship program, MLHS now offers many other courses aligned with career and technical education. These include Accounting, Intro to Engineering Design, Intro to Trades, Intro to Construction, Independent Living, and Woods.¹⁵⁴ In whatever Christian vocation a student chooses, MLHS strives to equip them with the tools to succeed and serve their Savior.¹⁵⁵

151. When asked to provide a standout moment or two from her ministry at MLHS, Miss Wilsman listed the high school graduations of many of the students she interacted with as learning coordinator as being among her proudest moments.

152. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, accessed November 17, 2025, <https://www.mlhlancers.org/guidance>.

153. David Uhlhorn, interview by author, October 10, 2025.

154. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Course of Study 2025–2026*, 51–56.

155. MLHS President Jason Hacker and Principal David Uhlhorn, in interviews for this paper, were both very clearly committed to this idea.

Soon after the completion of the expansion project in 1981, a change in administration came to MLHS. In May of 1983, Principal Worgull announced his acceptance of a call to a WELS mission congregation in Chandler, AZ.¹⁵⁶ In a farewell statement, Principal Worgull expressed appreciation for his time spent at MLHS: “It has been such a joy to live with and work with the many hundreds of people over the years who demonstrated their love and concern for the children whom God entrusts to our care.”¹⁵⁷ Over the summer months of 1983, Mr. Lutze served as Acting Principal until Pastor Karl Peterson accepted MLHS’s call to serve as principal.¹⁵⁸ Pastor Peterson was installed as principal on August 29, 1983, at the MLHS Opening Service.¹⁵⁹ Soon after his arrival, in November of 1983, Principal Peterson visited each of the seventeen area WELS Christian day schools in an effort to get to know the federation congregations and schools better and to recruit students to MLHS.¹⁶⁰

Other changes to the faculty included the arrival of several teachers who would serve long tenures at MLHS. Pastor Timothy Lindloff came to MLHS in the fall of 1988.¹⁶¹ Miss Jennifer Monke arrived in 1991 to serve as teacher and learning coordinator.¹⁶² Mr. Greg Schmill

156. “Principal’s Call,” *The Clarion*, May 1983, 2.

157. David Worgull, “Principal’s Report to the Federation,” *The Clarion*, June 1983, 1.

158. Pastor Peterson had previously served as principal at Huron Valley Lutheran High School in the Detroit area before accepting this call to MLHS. (“Call Report,” *The Clarion*, July–August 1983, 2.)

159. “New Principal Begins Work,” *The Clarion*, September 1983, 1.

160. “School Visits,” *The Clarion*, November 1983, 1.

161. “Welcome, Pastor Lindloff,” *The Clarion*, November/December 1988, 2. (Pastor Lindloff served as teacher at MLHS from 1988 until 2015. He also served as boys’ basketball coach for nineteen seasons. (Tom Dombeck, “Manitowoc Lutheran boys coach Lindloff resigns,” January 30, 2015.))

162. “Welcome New Staff Members,” *The Clarion* August 1991, 2.

arrived as chairman of the English department in 1993.¹⁶³ Mrs. Renee Schmill accepted a call to serve as grade school band director in 1996.¹⁶⁴ Pastor Beck Goldbeck joined the faculty as a religion teacher in 1998,¹⁶⁵ while Mr. Wayne Foelske¹⁶⁶ and Mr. David Uhlhorn came to MLHS in 1999.¹⁶⁷

Developments in the area of extracurricular activities also happened during these years. In 1993, after a ten-year pause, MLHS held a school-wide musical production, with the performance of “Bye Bye Birdie.”¹⁶⁸ A new electronic organ was purchased for the MLHS gymnasium and music department during the 1992–93 school year.¹⁶⁹ The MLHS athletic department also made advances during these years and scored many notable victories. The girls’ track and field team, coached by Miss Wilsman, won a remarkable four consecutive WISAA state championships, in 1983, 1984, 1985, and 1986. The girls’ volleyball team, coached by Mr. John Boeck, added a WISAA state championship of its own in 1989 and conference championships in 1992, 1994, 1996, and 1997. The girls’ track team added a fifth WISAA state

163. “Call News,” *The Clarion*, March 1993, 3. (Mr. Schmill served at MLHS in various capacities, including teacher, Guidance Director, and Assistant Principal, until taking a call to serve with the WELS Commission on Lutheran Schools in 2007.)

164. “Call News,” *The Clarion*, March/April 1996, 5. (Mrs. Schmill served at MLHS until her retirement in 2022.)

165. “MLHS Welcomes New Teachers,” *The Clarion*, September 1998, 3. (Pastor Goldbeck taught at MLHS until his retirement in 2017.)

166. Mr. Foelske taught in the MLHS Science department until his retirement in 2025.

167. “MLHS Welcomes New Faculty,” *The Clarion*, June 1999, 4. (Many other faithful teachers came and went from MLHS during these years; listed are those arrivals who served at MLHS for especially long periods of time.)

168. “Bye Bye Birdie,” *The Clarion*, April 1993, 4.

169. Brick, Habeck, Liese, Lutze, and Lutze, *Fortieth Anniversary History*, 17.

title in 1994.¹⁷⁰ On the boys' side, the Lancer football team, coached by Mr. Heiderich, earned WISAA state runner-up finishes in 1994 and 1995.¹⁷¹ The Lancer wrestling team, led by Mr. Carolfi, also achieved great success in the 1990s, winning conference championships in 1993, 1994, 1996, 1997, and 1998.¹⁷² Girls' fastpitch softball was added as a varsity sport in the spring of 1989,¹⁷³ while baseball and softball fields were built on campus in 1992.¹⁷⁴ Cross country, for both boys and girls, became a varsity sport in the fall of 1996.¹⁷⁵ The boys' cross country team subsequently captured conference championships in 1997 and 1998, while the boys' track and field team won a WISAA state championship in 1999.¹⁷⁶

Beginning in the early 1990s, MLHS was presented with several challenging situations. In 1991, Principal Peterson tendered his resignation from MLHS, effective June 30, 1991. Dr. George LaGrow, who had been serving as Professor of Education at Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, MN, accepted a call to serve as MLHS's principal.¹⁷⁷ He arrived at MLHS in the summer of 1991 and wrote these words of welcome in the August 1991 *Clarion*:

Our Lord supplies all our needs including the ability to fearlessly face the future. His Spirit equips us with that incredible ability to overcome all obstacles that would impede our efforts in His service. His promise that He will always be with us wherever we go

170. Gymnasium championship banner, Manitowoc Lutheran High School, Manitowoc, WI.

171. Brick, Habeck, Liese, Lutze, and Lutze, *Fortieth Anniversary History*, 21.

172. Gymnasium championship banner, Manitowoc Lutheran High School, Manitowoc, WI.

173. *The Clarion*, August 1988, 1.

174. Lakeland Landscape of Manitowoc helped with the construction of these fields. ("Board Talk," *The Clarion*, October 1992, 3.)

175. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Rooted & Growing in Christ Since 1956: 50th Anniversary Commemorative History*.

176. Gymnasium championship banner, Manitowoc Lutheran High School, Manitowoc, WI.

177. "Call News," *The Clarion*, March 1991, 4. (Dr. LaGrow was the first non-pastor to serve as MLHS's principal.)

provides comfort to all His people. It is that promise that gives me the confidence to approach this new challenge.... May we all remember this promise as we begin this new school year and face our new challenges. And may the Lord bless all our efforts in His name.¹⁷⁸

These words would prove to be good for all those involved with the work of MLHS to keep in mind in the years ahead. Significant financial challenges, ambitious building projects, and several more changes in administration would mark the remainder of the 1990s and early 2000s. Through it all, God's promises would continue to stand, and he would continue to bless MLHS.

MLHS did not find itself in a strong financial position at the beginning of the 1990s. A campaign entitled "Ponder Anew" had been started in the late 1980s in an attempt to "eliminate indebtedness and lay a sound financial foundation for the school's future."¹⁷⁹ While this campaign did raise significant funds to help pay down MLHS's debt, it was nowhere near enough to place the school on a solid foundation. With enrollment beginning to grow at a rapid pace and acute needs arising with respect to the facility, MLHS needed to address its ongoing financial struggles. In February 1992, a special meeting was held. All past and present members of the Board of Control were invited to attend.¹⁸⁰ Of special consideration was the declining level of financial support coming to MLHS from the federation congregations. This was causing MLHS to engage in deficit spending over a prolonged period of time. This was obviously not sustainable. A special committee was established to outline a course of action, with the understanding that they were dealing with "sensitive issues that need to be addressed cautiously with deep concern for one another."¹⁸¹ By 1994, however, conditions still had not improved.

178. George LaGrow, "Strength/Courage," *The Clarion*, August 1991, 1.

179. "Ponder Anew," *The Clarion*, October 1989, 3.

180. "Board Talk," *The Clarion*, January 1992, 2-3.

181. "Board Talk," *The Clarion*, 3.

Principal LaGrow reported that the school's line of credit with the bank was "almost exhausted," that it was "most unlikely that the Federation will have enough money available to pay salaries of the faculty and staff during the 'dry' summer months," and that the school needed "to implement solid solutions to our financial challenge."¹⁸² Making matters more difficult was an urgently needed series of roof repairs that was completed in 1995.¹⁸³ Thankfully, faithful federation members gave generous gifts to this project, allowing it to be completed in a timely manner.

Perhaps sensing the need to devote more attention to financial matters, MLHS created the position of Director of Resources around this time. The Director of Resources would be responsible for maintaining the school's financial records and for "developing interest, good will, and financial support to assure adequate support for the Christian Education Ministry of the Federation through its high school."¹⁸⁴ In 1995, Mr. Jon Haberman became MLHS's first Director of Resources,¹⁸⁵ a position that would later be known as Development Director.¹⁸⁶ Today, its closest equivalent is the Director of Mission Advancement. Mr. Robert Richardson became the second Director of Resources in 1999 but died shortly thereafter, in October 2000.¹⁸⁷

182. George LaGrow, "Who Can Help?," *The Clarion*, April 1994, 1.

183. "Maintain Our Roof," *The Clarion*, August 1995, 3–4.

184. Brick, Habeck, Liese, Lutze, and Lutze, *Fortieth Anniversary History*, 17.

185. "Welcome Jon Habermann, Director of Resources!," *The Clarion*, December 1995, 2.

186. A June 1999 *Clarion* article, "DOR Accepts Call," describes the duties of the Director of Resources in this way: "He will assist in the development of promotional materials; coordinate all efforts to help generate financial resources for MLHS; assist congregations as requested in planning their financial support for MLHS; provide leadership in establishing support opportunities for individuals, various support groups, alumni, corporations, businesses, and foundation grants with such programs to be keeping with sound scriptural practice and approved policies." Also listed is a responsibility for all business and financial reports.

187. "In Memoriam...," *The Clarion*, December 2000, 2.

Mr. Kurt Troge filled this position until Mr. Scott Reinhard became the Development Director in 2002. Mr. Reinhard served in this capacity until his death in January 2019.

Ultimately, MLHS would need to adjust its funding model to find a long-term solution to its financial crisis, relying more on tuition revenue than on congregational contributions.¹⁸⁸ A general operating-fund model that once relied more on congregational support than on tuition revenue began to shift. Today, MLHS's budget relies 71% on tuition, 14% on congregational support, and 15% on other revenue sources.¹⁸⁹ In addition to the shift toward tuition-dominant funding, a variety of other developments would help alleviate MLHS's financial difficulties. These include the expansion of the International Program, completing the accreditation process,¹⁹⁰ the introduction of school choice in 2015, and the multi-faceted capital campaign project on which MLHS was about to embark.

First, though, there was another change in administration. In 1996, after serving as principal for five years, Dr. LaGrow stepped down from his role as principal and returned to classroom teaching. Mr. Kurt Troge, who was previously a teacher at Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School in New Ulm, MN, accepted MLHS's call to be the new principal beginning in the fall of 1996.¹⁹¹ Dr. LaGrow remained on the MLHS faculty as a teacher and Assistant Principal until 2001. As Mr. Troge's tenure as principal began, MLHS's enrollment was growing rapidly.

188. With the understanding that tuition would need to increase significantly, there was a renewed emphasis at this time on the importance of providing tuition assistance programs to students' families, both on the high school and congregational levels.

189. "General Fund," *The Shield*, Fall 2025–2026, 3.

190. This may have helped make the school more appealing to more students, including those who did not necessarily attend a WELS elementary school. It was also necessary for the expansion of the International Program and the eventual introduction of school choice.

191. "Call News," *The Clarion*, February/March 1996, 4.

In the fall of 1997, MLHS had a then-record enrollment of 364 students, including 105 freshmen.¹⁹² A year later, in the fall of 1998, enrollment was even larger, with 381 students enrolled.¹⁹³ Even as the school continued to work out its financial challenges, this increasing enrollment revealed a clear need to expand the facilities of MLHS.

192. "Record Enrollment for MLHS!," *The Clarion*, September 1997, 4–5.

193. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Rooted & Growing in Christ Since 1956: 50th Anniversary Commemorative History*. (As of 2025, this number stands as the largest enrollment ever for MLHS. After this peak year, enrollment would begin a gradual decline, dropping back under 300 students in the fall of 2003. Recently, enrollment has grown again at a rapid pace, rising from 209 students in 2019–2020 to 300 students in the fall of 2025.)

ADVANCING IN A NEW CENTURY

A Phased Approach (1999–2013)

A major first step toward expansion was the MLHS Board of Control's appointment of the Site Development Committee in May 1999.¹⁹⁴ This committee was tasked with developing “a comprehensive plan of the present and future campus needs and requirements to allow the school to more completely fulfill its mission and purpose.”¹⁹⁵ Committee members surveyed MLHS parents, students, faculty, and staff. They toured other high schools and interviewed architectural firms. In 2000, the Hoffman Corporation of Appleton, WI, was hired to prepare a site plan that detailed what work needed to be done. A large-scale expansion effort was proposed, including a new gymnasium and locker rooms, new choir and band rooms, a student commons, and new administrative offices.¹⁹⁶ All told, the projected cost of these projects was \$9.2–\$10.8 million.¹⁹⁷

194. “What has been done so far?,” *Building Update: From Generation to Generation* (Manitowoc, WI: Manitowoc Lutheran High School) October 2000, 2.

195. “What has been done so far?,” *Building Update: From Generation to Generation*.

196. “How do these proposed revisions impact the curriculum and associated activities of Manitowoc Lutheran High School?,” *Building Update: From Generation to Generation* (Manitowoc, WI: Manitowoc Lutheran High School) February 2001, 3.

197. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Renewing Our Resources from Generation to Generation: Improving Our Atmosphere for Learning*, 2001, 3.

For a school that had been drawing from its Endowment Fund just to cover its line of credit with the bank¹⁹⁸ and had a recent history of budget dilemmas, this was a daunting figure.

Commenting on this reality, Principal Troge wrote in the September 2001 *Clarion*:

The task at hand seems absolutely overwhelming to many. Some would ask, “How can an organization which has seldom balanced its budget in recent years ever hope to accomplish such a task?” Some might even accuse us of lunacy, maybe even being fiscally irresponsible... We have our hearts and minds set to do the Lord’s will. The goal itself is God-pleasing and its accomplishment will strengthen and enhance our federation’s ability to fulfill Manitowoc Lutheran High School through its ministry to teens. By ourselves we fail. The goal is so audacious that it can only be accomplished by divine intervention. Nothing less than a miracle will be needed, and so we do well to continually seek our Lord’s blessings on this huge undertaking.¹⁹⁹

Considering the large price tag and the level of existing debt MLHS carried, the federation decided to undertake the needed projects in phases. The commons was chosen for inclusion in the first phase. As a gathering space that would be constructed in a very visible location²⁰⁰ and that benefited all students, this was a sensible choice for Phase I. In the fall of 2001, MLHS began a capital campaign entitled “Partners in Christ” to raise funds for the construction of the commons and for debt retirement. The “Partners in Christ” campaign was presented to the area WELS congregations as an opportunity to raise funds both for MLHS and for the congregation. Gifts given to the campaign would be split equally between the donating individual’s congregation and MLHS unless otherwise noted.²⁰¹ By the end of this campaign, almost \$6 million was raised, \$2 million of which was directed toward MLHS.²⁰² This was a

198. “Federation Feedback: A Plan of Action,” *The Clarion*, January/February 2002, 2.

199. Kurt Troge, “The Battle is God’s!,” *The Clarion*, September 2001, 2.

200. The commons was built just north of the gymnasium, between it and Lancer Circle.

201. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Renewing Our Resources from Generation to Generation: Improving Our Atmosphere for Learning*, 2001, 8.

202. Scott Reinhard, “Phase II,” *Lancer Legends*, Fall/Winter 2006, 1.

sufficient amount of funds to proceed with the commons project. Ground was broken on April 1, 2004, and the commons was dedicated on August 29, 2004.²⁰³ In the words of current MLHS principal David Uhlhorn, the construction of the commons was a “gamechanger”²⁰⁴ for the school and the federation. It created a large space that could serve as a lunchroom and study hall for students during the school day, and it provided a suitable gathering space for people before and after large events held in the gymnasium.²⁰⁵ For those who only know the school as it is today, it is difficult to imagine MLHS without the commons.

Sadly, Mr. Troge was not able to see the dedication of the commons. After a battle with brain cancer, he passed away on May 24, 2004. Due to his illness, Mr. Troge had previously stepped down as principal and teacher in June 2002. After briefly returning to the classroom in the fall of 2003, he was forced to step away again in January 2004.²⁰⁶ In the wake of Mr. Troge’s illness and death, Mr. Steinbrenner assumed the principalship, first as acting principal, then on a permanent basis.²⁰⁷

While the construction of the commons marked a major success for MLHS, the school did not emerge from the project debt-free; about \$700,000 of debt remained.²⁰⁸ There were still

203. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Rooted & Growing in Christ Since 1956: 50th Anniversary Commemorative History*. (See Appendix 6 for pictures from the commons project.)

204. David Uhlhorn, interview by author, October 10, 2025.

205. Also included in this project was a small office and conference area, a new concessions area, new restrooms to serve the commons, a new staircase connecting the commons to the second floor classrooms, a new roof over the 1981 portion of the building, and a new boiler. (Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *MLHS Building Update—A Plan of Action*, 2004, 2.)

206. Kurt W. Troge obituary.

207. Mr. Steinbrenner served as principal at MLHS until his retirement at the end of the 2013–14 school year.

208. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Proclaiming Christ Today and Tomorrow*, Manitowoc, WI: Manitowoc Lutheran High School, 3.

significant facility needs that needed to be addressed. Even with the construction of the commons, it remained true that since the 1981 building addition there had been no construction or upgrade of classroom space.²⁰⁹ Much like what had happened with the commons project, MLHS took an approach that Principal Steinbrenner refers to as “two steps forward, one step back.”²¹⁰ This basically meant that funds raised for a new campaign (or phase of the campaign) would hopefully accomplish two goals (“steps forward”): first, pay off old debt. Second, it would also provide enough money to construct that phase of the campaign. The “step back” was that debt from the new project would most likely remain. With this strategy in mind, MLHS officially began Phase II of their building plan.

This phase was concentrated on constructing new facilities for the music department. The existing facilities where the MLHS choirs and bands practiced were “overcrowded and deficient.”²¹¹ Mr. Joel Ungemach, MLHS’s fine arts director, had recently arrived at the school in the fall of 2004. As he recalls the conditions of the MLHS music facilities when he arrived at the school, he says that they may not have been hampering the participation rate of students in the fine arts. However, the conditions were “certainly hampering our quality.”²¹² Practices for MLHS’s music groups were generally held either in an upstairs classroom²¹³ or on risers on the gymnasium stage. The classroom had an incredibly low ceiling, while the stage had an incredibly high ceiling. Neither option was ideal, acoustically-speaking. Mr. Ungemach recalls taking one

209. Scott Reinhard, “Phase II,” *Lancer Legends*.

210. Dennis Steinbrenner, interview by author, October 17, 2025.

211. Scott Reinhard, “Phase II,” *Lancer Legends*.

212. Joel Ungemach, interview by author, October 10, 2025.

213. This is the room that today functions as the art room.

of his choirs to a music festival to be judged by a clinician. The clinician asked why the choir was singing with such excessive volume and why the director was directing with his hands unusually high. These habits were the result of rehearsal conditions marked by very poor acoustics and inconvenient setup arrangements.²¹⁴

The MLHS music program has long been a very visible part of the school's mission and work. Most significantly, MLHS musical groups participate in sacred concerts and worship services at the school, at area WELS congregations, and in the Manitowoc community. Annual Christmas concerts date back to 1959. Other sacred concerts have been held at the school through the years, and faculty and student instrumentalists and ensembles help lead daily chapel services. One major development in the MLHS music department came when the Christmas concert was first held at the Capitol Civic Centre in downtown Manitowoc in December 2002. The Capitol Civic Centre provides a grand, elegant setting for the concert, making it a memorable experience for students and attendees alike. It has also encouraged community members otherwise unaffiliated with MLHS to attend and hear the good news of Jesus' birth.²¹⁵ MLHS continues to hold its annual Christmas concert at the Capitol Civic Centre today. Also, the practice of holding MLHS Sundays at area congregations with the Lancer Singers performing has been extremely beneficial, both for students and the school. These Sunday services, which rotate between federation congregations on a roughly three-year cycle, give students an opportunity to serve the congregations that support MLHS. They also increase the visibility of MLHS in federation congregations and provide those congregations with opportunities to

214. Joel Ungemach, interview by author, October 10, 2025.

215. Mr. Ungemach reports numerous interactions he has had with non-WELS people in the community who comment positively about the MLHS Christmas concert. MLHS is also given opportunities for free local advertising simply because the concert is held at the Capitol Civic Centre.

support MLHS with special offerings. This important area of MLHS's ministry, the Fine Arts program, was in need of new facilities to support its work.

So, in the fall of 2006, Phase II of the capital campaign, focused on building a new music center, officially began, with the additional goal of eliminating debt from Phase I. In announcing the beginning of this phase, Development Director Scott Reinhard framed the project as an opportunity to support the school's students as they use their God-given gifts to God's glory: "This next appeal and building project won't just be about shiny new rooms or brick and mortar. Rather, by renovating and renewing educational space we will strive to provide our students with a reminder to passionately make the most of the gifts and talents they've been given by God."²¹⁶ By the end of 2007, \$1.7 million in gifts and pledges had been received by MLHS, and A.C.E. Building Service of Manitowoc was hired to draw blueprints and site plans for the proposed project.²¹⁷ Thanks to a "large gift from a generous benefactor"²¹⁸ and many other donors, the expansion project was officially approved in December 2007.²¹⁹ Groundbreaking was held the next spring, and the building was officially dedicated in a worship service on November 2, 2008.²²⁰

The final project included spacious choir and band rooms engineered for optimal acoustics. Also included in this project were a music classroom located between the choir and

216. Scott Reinhard, "Phase II," *Lancer Legends*.

217. "Here We Grow Again!," *Lancer Legends*, Fall/Winter 2007, 1.

218. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, "Phase II Fine Arts Center," 2008.

219. "Here We Grow Again!," *Lancer Legends*.

220. "Fine Arts Center Dedication November 2, 2008," *Lancer Legends*, Fall/Winter 2008, 1.

band rooms, practice rooms for musicians, and additional storage rooms.²²¹ The “old music room,” located on the second floor above the locker rooms, was repurposed and renovated to serve as an art classroom, and additional parking space was added to service the music center addition.²²² These Fine Arts facilities have stood the test of time and remain first-rate amenities for MLHS today.

In the years between the dedications of Phase I and Phase II, one notable development for MLHS included the opening of the Repeat Performance resale store in 2005. Proceeds from sales at this store are given to MLHS. As of 2025, Repeat Performance has provided over \$2.5 million to MLHS.²²³ The school also observed its fiftieth anniversary with several special events during the 2005–2006 school year, including a special anniversary worship service on October 30, 2005. Nearly 1000 were in attendance.

Even as the building underwent several expansions during the decade of the 2000s, MLHS’s enrollment experienced a decrease, falling to 205 by the fall of 2009.²²⁴ Earlier that year, MLHS called an admissions director as one aspect of its response to the declining enrollment. Mr. Kevin Buch accepted this call to serve as admissions director.²²⁵ The purpose and objective of the admissions director position was described in this way: “to promote and grow

221. These storage rooms are primarily used for drama storage, which had previously been mostly in the basement.

222. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, “Phase II Fine Arts Center.”

223. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, accessed November 26, 2025, <https://www.mlhslancers.org/giving>.

224. Dennis Steinbrenner, “From the Principal,” *Lancer Legends*, Spring 2009, 2.

225. Today Mr. Buch serves as MLHS’s Director of Mission Advancement. Prior to his service at MLHS, he had served as principal at First German Lutheran School in Manitowoc.

Christian education on all levels, throughout our Federation.”²²⁶ Specifically, this included building relationships between MLHS and area WELS elementary schools, helping those schools develop recruitment programs, and building enrollment at both the elementary schools and the high school of the federation.²²⁷ At this time, the Lakeshore Lutheran Schools educational association was officially formed. Today, this association still exists “to build a cooperative association of teachers, administrations, students, families, and local communities.”²²⁸ In the wake of these efforts, enrollment at MLHS stabilized in the early 2010s before beginning to increase once again.

By November 2010, MLHS was ready to embark on Phase III of its capital campaign, and the federation officially voted to begin efforts toward that end.²²⁹ This phase was intended to focus on renovating the existing science classrooms, while also eliminating the remaining debt from the previous Phase II addition.²³⁰ According to Principal Steinbrenner, the science classrooms were located in a very visible location within the school building—on the first floor, in the main hallway. Additionally, the science and technology capabilities of a school are often considered some of the most important measures of a school’s excellence. This made improving the existing science classrooms a top priority. By the fall of 2012, the renovation of the science classrooms was completed. Additionally, as part of Phase III, improvements were made to the

226. Jerry Haupt, “From the Admissions Committee Chairman,” *Lancer Legends*, 2008–2009, 6.

227. Jerry Haupt, “From the Admissions Committee Chairman,” *Lancer Legends*.

228. Lakeshore Lutheran Schools, accessed November 28, 2025, <https://lakeshorelutheranschools.net/about>.

229. Jerry Haupt, “From the Board Chairman,” *Lancer Legends*, Winter 2010, 2.

230. Originally, new locker rooms and physical education and fitness spaces were also under consideration for this project. Eventually, they would be postponed to a later project due to cost considerations.

industrial arts equipment in the basement. New power tools and environmental fans were purchased, while improvements were also made to the foods classroom.²³¹ Crucially, Phase III raised a sufficient amount of revenue to eliminate debt for all three phases.²³² Nearly fifteen years after Phase I of the campaign began, MLHS had achieved a broad enhancement of its campus while also significantly strengthening its financial position. This series of projects continues to benefit the many students who use the commons, music facilities, and science classrooms on a daily basis. It also set the stage for MLHS's enrollment growth in the late 2010s and early 2020s and for the largest building project yet.

One final change to MLHS's campus was the renovation of the football facilities, made possible by a grant from the National Football League. MLHS applied for this grant primarily because its bleachers were insufficient to host a playoff football game under WIAA rules.²³³ When awarded the grant funds, MLHS was able to expand its bleachers, renovate its press box, and install fencing around the football facility. In November 2013, Mark Murphy, then-president and CEO of the Green Bay Packers, visited MLHS to present the check to school officials in a special ceremony held after the daily chapel service. Principal Steinbrenner fondly recalls this day, especially the impression MLHS had on Murphy: "At the end of chapel, [Murphy] looked at me and he said, 'Do you guys do this every day?' And I said, 'Yes, we do.' And he said, 'That's wonderful.'"²³⁴ Principal Steinbrenner further added, "Just from those ten minutes, he recognized

231. Dennis Steinbrenner, interview by author, October 17, 2025.

232. Dennis Steinbrenner, interview by author, October 17, 2025.

233. Manitowoc Lutheran High School joined the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) in 2000, when WISAA ceased to exist. Previously, the WIAA had barred private schools from joining, but it changed this policy when WISAA folded.

234. Dennis Steinbrenner, interview by author, October 17, 2025.

what makes us special.”²³⁵ Indeed, while academics, extracurricular activities, building projects, and financial matters are all important to any secondary school’s mission, what makes MLHS truly special is that all of these occur in a Christ-centered environment. This was evident to that visitor from Green Bay on that day in November 2013, and by God’s grace it will hopefully remain clear to all who enter the doors of MLHS for years to come.

The Modern Era (2013–Present)

At the end of the 2013–14 school year, Principal Steinbrenner retired, and Mr. Ryan Rathje accepted MLHS’s call to serve as principal. Mr. Rathje had first arrived at MLHS in the fall of 2012 as a mathematics teacher and the school’s technology coordinator²³⁶ before becoming principal in the fall of 2014.

While Mr. Rathje was principal, MLHS implemented a significant change to its leadership structure with the addition of the position of President. Pastor Norval Kock, who had previously served at Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw, MI, accepted MLHS’s call to serve as its first president and arrived at MLHS in the fall of 2016. In an interview for this paper, President Kock explained the intent of the newly created position. The president would work with the entire MLHS Federation, making connections with congregations and the pastors of those congregations. He would also serve as a pastoral leader for the faculty of MLHS.²³⁷ The presence of a school president would also allow the principal to focus primarily on the daily

235. Dennis Steinbrenner, interview by author, October 17, 2025.

236. Dennis Steinbrenner, “From the Principal,” *Lancer Legends*, Fall 2012, 2.

237. Norval Kock, interview by author, September 12, 2025.

operation of the school. Pastor Kock served as MLHS's president until the end of the 2023–24 school year, when Pastor Jason Hacker accepted MLHS's call to serve as president,²³⁸ a position he holds today.

Principal Rathje, after serving as MLHS's principal for three years, accepted a call to St. Croix Lutheran Academy in West St. Paul, MN, at the end of the 2016–17 school year. Mr. Uhlhorn, who had been a teacher at MLHS since 1999, served as acting principal for the 2017–18 school year before accepting the school's call to serve permanently as principal beginning with the 2018–19 school year.²³⁹ Mr. Uhlhorn continues to serve as MLHS's principal today.

One final project from the site plan originally proposed at the turn of the twenty-first century remained: a new gymnasium and locker rooms. With one gymnasium that also served as the school's auditorium, students were often kept on campus until late in the evening for practices. Additionally, coordinating the use of the dual-purpose gymnasium and auditorium facility often became complicated, especially during certain seasons of the year. A new, expanded gymnasium would certainly serve MLHS well.

The athletic teams competing in the gymnasium (and on other fields of competition) have had their fair share of success in the twenty-first century. The boys' basketball teams continued a run of success that began in the 1990s, claiming six consecutive conference championships from 1998–2003, with additional conference titles in 2007 and 2020.²⁴⁰ The football team claimed conference championships in 2011 and 2025.²⁴¹ Girls' basketball won their conference in 2003,

238. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, "Weekly Update," May 28, 2024.

239. David Uhlhorn, interview by author, October 10, 2025.

240. Gymnasium championship banner, Manitowoc Lutheran High School, Manitowoc, WI.

241. Gymnasium championship banner, Manitowoc Lutheran High School, Manitowoc, WI.

2004, 2018, and 2025. Girls' softball won conference titles in 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2007, while girls' cross country won conference in 2003, and track and field in 2022. Perhaps the sport with the highest level of success in MLHS history, especially in the twenty-first century, is girls' volleyball. This century alone the MLHS volleyball team has captured conference championships in 2005, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2017, 2020, 2021, 2024, and 2025. This extended run of success was punctuated by consecutive state championships won in 2024 and 2025 under head coach Mrs. Lacey Behnke.²⁴²

The student-athletes of MLHS, and so many more, would benefit from the completion of the gymnasium and locker room project. In the late 2010s, efforts to complete this ambitious project began. However, a series of difficult and unforeseen events led to delays in the construction effort. The sudden death of Scott Reinhard, MLHS's Development Director, in January 2019, was a profound loss for the MLHS community.²⁴³ Naturally, his absence also created challenges for the capital campaign he had helped guide. Then, in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic further complicated the effort. By 2022, efforts to build a new gymnasium had resumed. In May 2023, federation delegates officially approved the creation of construction drawings which were to be distributed to contractors for bids.²⁴⁴ In an August 2023 "Capital Campaign Update," MLHS explained the need to "reboot" the campaign, alluding to these and other challenges, noting: "We were facing...cost overruns due to an increased project scope and significant changes in the cost of materials and fundraising that did not reach its goal due to several unforeseen setbacks.... While we had several very generous gifts, we did not achieve the

242. Gymnasium championship banner, Manitowoc Lutheran High School, Manitowoc, WI.

243. Scott C. Reinhard Obituary.

244. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, "Capital Campaign Update–August 2023," August 15, 2023, <https://www.mlhslancers.org/post/capital-campaign-update-august-2023>.

number that was needed.”²⁴⁵ Soon after, sufficient funds had been raised to go forward with construction, and on Wednesday, September 27, 2023, a groundbreaking ceremony was held.²⁴⁶ Speakers included Mr. Kevin Buch, MLHS’s Director of Mission Advancement, and Mr. Martin Plocher, who served as Campaign Director. In his remarks Mr. Plocher stated, “This campaign is not about the brick and mortar. It is about what happens inside these walls that make the Lancer family come alive. We prepare young hearts and minds for service for eternity, and for that we are thankful.”²⁴⁷ In a demonstration of the importance of the area WELS grade schools to the future of MLHS, the “official ‘groundbreakers’” included “one student from each grade, K–12, representing their Lakeshore Lutheran Grade School.”²⁴⁸

By the spring of 2024, construction of the gymnasium was well underway. After a final push to raise more funds,²⁴⁹ enough money was on hand to proceed with the construction of new locker rooms to accompany the new gymnasium. Construction was completed in the fall of 2024, with a special dedication service held on December 15, 2024. The dedication service began in the old gymnasium before processing into the new gymnasium for the dedication. It included a

245. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, “Capital Campaign Update–August 2023,” August 15, 2023, <https://www.mlhslancers.org/post/capital-campaign-update-august-2023>.

246. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, “Capital Campaign Quarterly Update–November 2023,” November 3, 2023, <https://www.mlhslancers.org/post/capital-campaign-quarterly-update-november-2023>. (See Appendix 7 for a picture from this groundbreaking ceremony.)

247. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, “Capital Campaign Quarterly Update–November 2023,” November 3, 2023, <https://www.mlhslancers.org/post/capital-campaign-quarterly-update-november-2023>.

248. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, “Capital Campaign Quarterly Update–November 2023,” November 3, 2023, <https://www.mlhslancers.org/post/capital-campaign-quarterly-update-november-2023>.

249. \$150,000 was raised at the 2024 Lancer Gala for the locker room portion of the project. (Manitowoc Lutheran High School, “Capital Campaign Quarterly Update–August 2024,” July 31, 2024, <https://www.mlhslancers.org/post/capital-campaign-quarterly-update-august-2024>.)

mass choir composed of high school and area elementary school students. Pastor Tom Unke, an alumnus of MLHS, preached the sermon.

The addition of a new gymnasium and locker rooms has greatly benefited MLHS students as well as many others. With the additional practice space for both athletic and fine arts practices, students are generally able to be home sooner in the evenings. MLHS's home gymnasium now has a higher capacity. MLHS can more comfortably host grade school basketball tournaments and other large events on campus. The locker room spaces are larger and more modern for Lancer athletes and visitors alike. MLHS President Jason Hacker, in an interview for this paper, described the excitement among students, faculty, staff, and supporters that accompanies the completion of a project like this. Such moments inspire a sense of pride and ownership, and a recognition that many people care deeply about the school, its mission, and its students.²⁵⁰ God-willing, the new gymnasium will serve MLHS for many years to come.

250. Jason Hacker, interview by author, October 13, 2025.

CONCLUSION

The defining characteristics of MLHS are perhaps best expressed in the words of its recent leaders. Principal Uhlhorn said, “Manitowoc Lutheran is grounded in tradition, in loyalty. We have a really good, dedicated federation that cares about what happens here.”²⁵¹ President Hacker spoke of the “absolute depth of support locally” and the “historically strong desire for the school and the supporting of Christian education.”²⁵² As one recent indication of the level of support from the MLHS Federation for the school, both pointed to the incredible fan turnout that the MLHS volleyball team has had at its games at the state tournament in 2024 and 2025. As the school prepares for the possibility of continued growth in the coming years, President Hacker emphasized the importance of remembering the gospel-centered ministry of MLHS: “These souls are entrusted to us by our Lord Jesus, and he will hold us responsible for caring for those souls. That is very important.”²⁵³

“Manitowoc Lutheran High School uses its God-given gifts to help each student become thoroughly equipped for paths of service to our Redeemer.”²⁵⁴ In recounting the history of MLHS, it is impossible to capture all the everyday happenings that further this mission of the school. However, even in a brief survey of the “big” events, major milestones, and visionary leaders, it is apparent that MLHS has been richly blessed by a loving God. There have certainly

251. Dave Uhlhorn, interview by author, October 10, 2025.

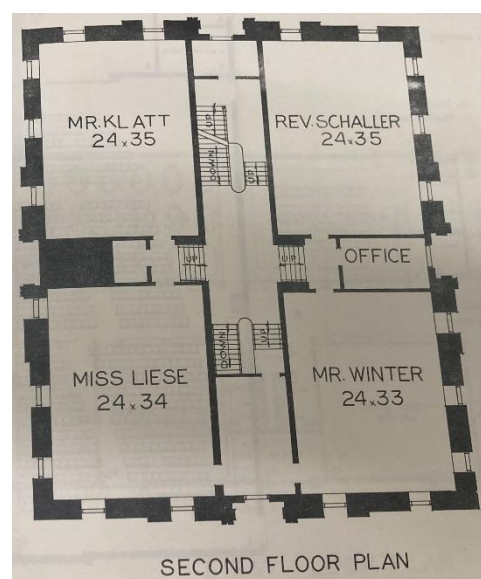
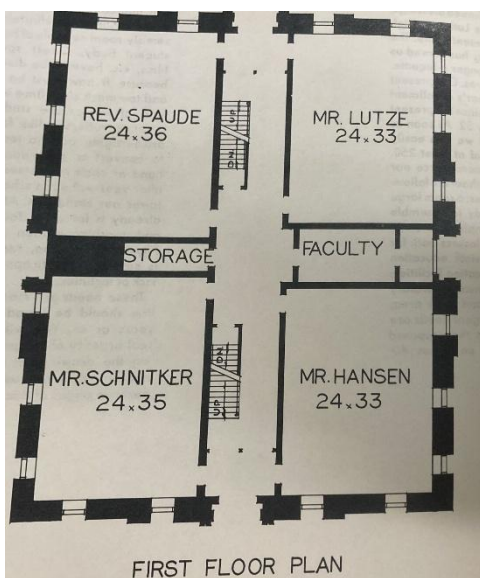
252. Jason Hacker, interview by author, October 13, 2025.

253. Jason Hacker, interview by author, October 13, 2025.

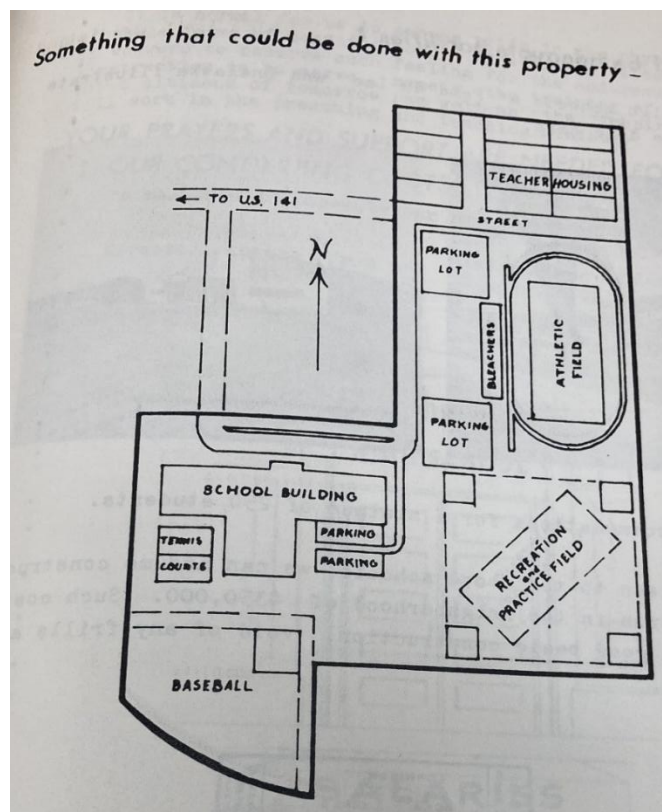
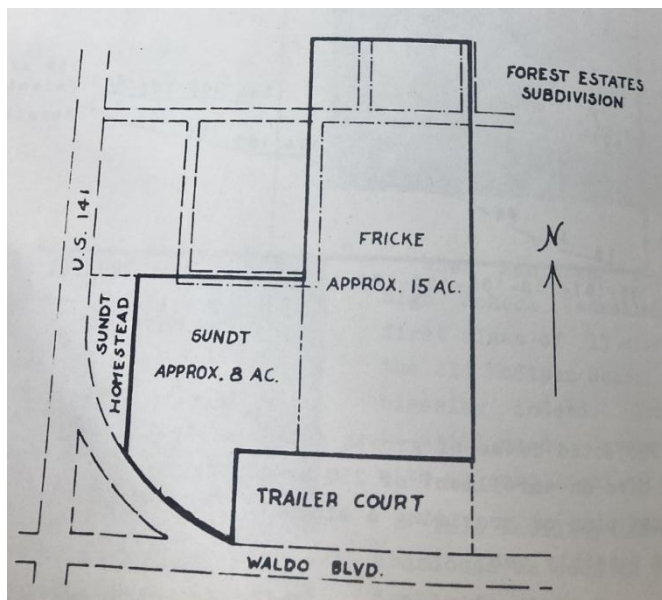
254. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Course of Study 2025–2026*, 5.

been challenging moments along the way, but through it all, God has blessed the MLHS Federation, its members, its teachers, and its students with amazing gifts that are clearly demonstrated throughout the school's history. From the dedication and resolve of the school's founders to the innovative programs and expansions pursued in later decades, those involved in the ministry of MLHS have dedicated themselves to the mission of Christian education.

God has prepared paths of service for his children to carry out during their earthly lives. He has blessed MLHS with the privilege and responsibility of preparing its students for those paths of service. For nearly seventy years, MLHS has faithfully carried out that privileged responsibility and, with God's blessing, will continue to do so in the years to come.

APPENDIX 1: MADISON SCHOOL BUILDING PICTURE & DIAGRAMS²⁵⁵

255. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Rooted & Growing in Christ Since 1956: 50th Anniversary Commemorative History*; Manitowoc Lutheran High School, "A Future for Our Youth."

APPENDIX 2: PROPERTY DIAGRAMS FROM MID-1960'S²⁵⁶

256. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, "A Future for Our Youth."

APPENDIX 3: PICTURES FROM ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION²⁵⁷

January 9, 1966. Groundbreaking Ceremony at MLHS.



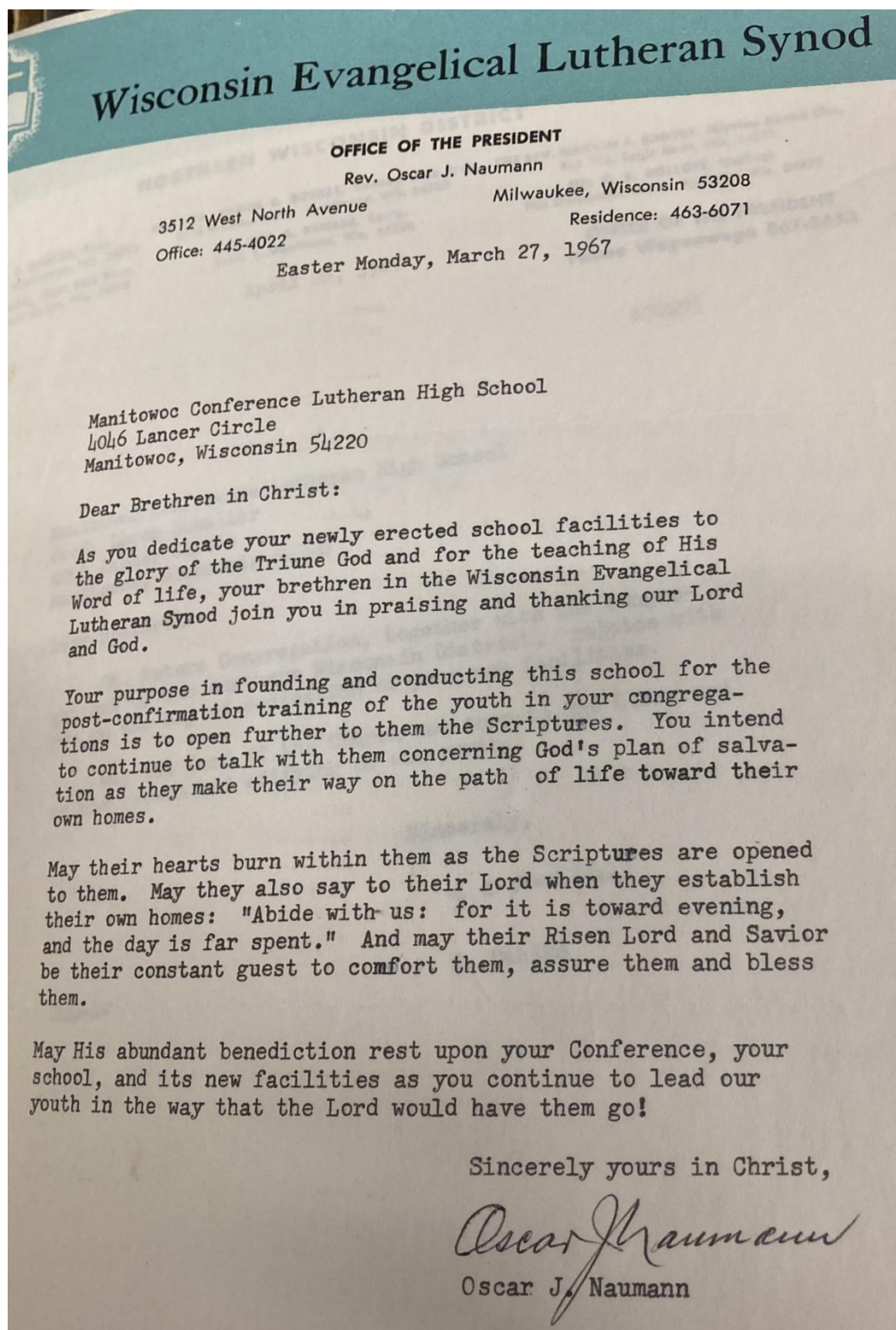
Sign at site of new school.

257. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Rooted & Growing in Christ Since 1956: 50th Anniversary Commemorative History*.



Newly constructed school building.

APPENDIX 4: LETTER FROM WELS PRESIDENT OSCAR NAUMANN UPON MLHS'S
BUILDING DEDICATION



APPENDIX 5: PICTURE OF SCHOOL SIGN²⁵⁸

258. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Rooted & Growing in Christ Since 1956: 50th Anniversary Commemorative History*.

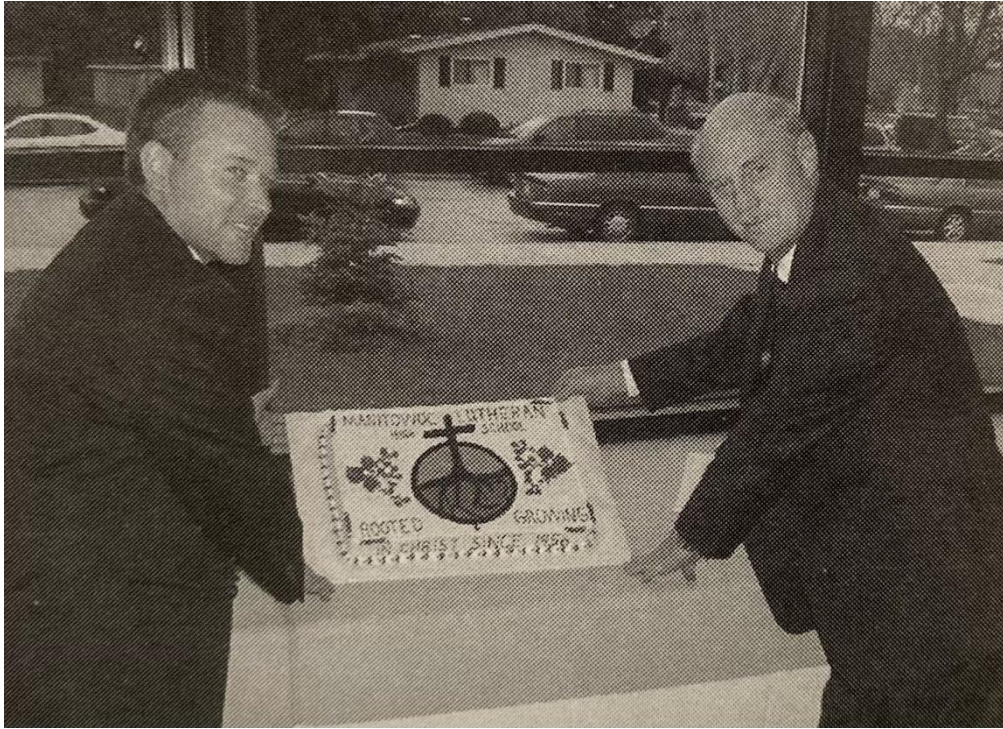
APPENDIX 6: PICTURES FROM COMMONS PROJECT²⁵⁹

April 1, 2004. Mr. Kurt Troge (seated) at the groundbreaking ceremony for the commons.



The newly completed commons pictured from Lancer Circle.

259. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Rooted & Growing in Christ Since 1956: 50th Anniversary Commemorative History*.



August 29, 2004. Mr. Scott Reinhard (left) and Mr. Dennis Steinbrenner (right) at the commons dedication.

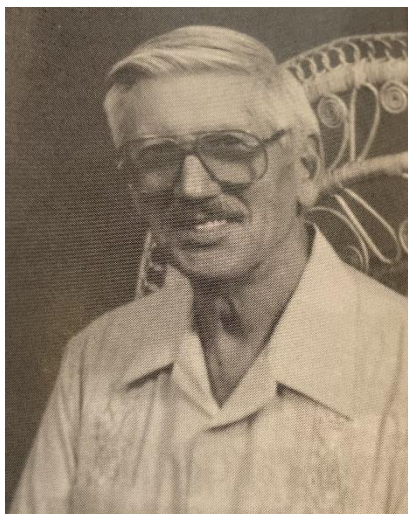
APPENDIX 7: GYMANSIUM ADDITION²⁶⁰

September 27, 2023. Group picture at the groundbreaking for new gymnasium.

260. Manitowoc Lutheran High School, “Capital Campaign Quarterly Update–November 2023,” November 3, 2023, <https://www.mlhslancers.org/post/capital-campaign-quarterly-update-november-2023>.

APPENDIX 8: PRINCIPALS OF MLHS²⁶¹

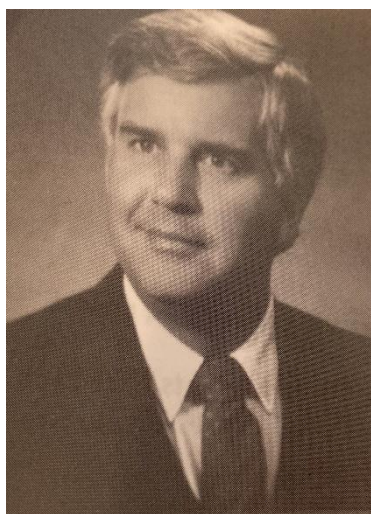
Pastor Kenneth Seim
1956–1960



Pastor Loren Schaller
1960–1975



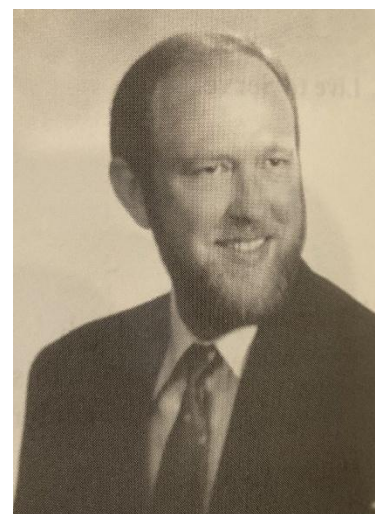
Pastor David Worgull
1975–1983



Pastor Karl Peterson
1983–1991

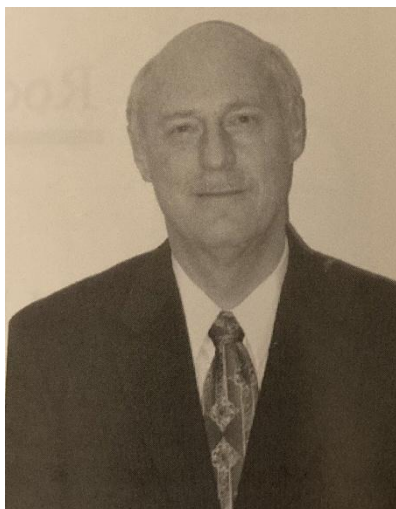


Dr. George LaGrow
1991–1996



Mr. Kurt Troge
1996–2001

²⁶¹ Manitowoc Lutheran High School, *Rooted & Growing in Christ Since 1956: 50th Anniversary Commemorative History*; “Faculty/Staff Directory,” Manitowoc Lutheran High School, archived February 19, 2015, http://www.mlhslancers.org/site/cpage.asp?sec_id=180015619&cpage_id=180074803; “Faculty & Staff,” Manitowoc Lutheran High School, Accessed December 6, 2025, <https://mlhslancers.org/fac-staff>.



Mr. Dennis Steinbrenner
2001–2014



Mr. Ryan Rathje
2014–2017



Mr. David Uhlhorn
2017–Present

APPENDIX 9: PRESIDENTS OF MLHS²⁶²

Pastor Norval Kock
2016–2024



Pastor Jason Hacker
2024–Present

262. “Faculty/Staff Directory,” Manitowoc Lutheran High School, archived September 25, 2017, http://www.mlhslancers.org/site/cpage.asp?sec_id=180015619&cpage_id=180074803; “Faculty & Staff,” Manitowoc Lutheran High School, Accessed December 6, 2025, <https://mlhslancers.org/fac-staff>.

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