

SNAPSHOT

SPRING 2021



WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES



As I write this we are exactly one year removed from the date on which Governor Whitmer closed all Michigan schools in an effort to “flatten the curve” of COVID-19. Since that time “non-essential” businesses have been closed and are only beginning to re-engage at limited capacity. Schools have pivoted from in-person to virtual and hybrid models of instruction. The American workplace was redefined by Zoom meetings and home offices. Professional athletes competed in bubbles and empty stadiums. The transportation industry was grounded and entertainment venues went vacant. Racism and politics divided our country more than at any other time in our memory. It has been a year that none of us predicted, nor one that any of us wants to relive.

Michigan Lutheran Seminary was not immune to many of these changes as well. In March of 2020 we suspended school for what was anticipated to be a 2-week period, only to conclude the year with a virtual graduation ceremony for our seniors. In August of 2020 classes began in-person, pivoted to virtual, and have since returned to in-person instruction. On two occasions, room and board rebates were provided to families who had teenage children setting up learning spaces in dining rooms and bedrooms. Gracious host families “adopted” students from foreign countries who could not return home. Athletic seasons were cancelled and others completed under limited capacity restrictions. Normal high school events such as Homecoming, Taste of Ministry, and Project Titus experiences were cancelled. Mental health struggles are real, increasing, and concerning.

Many of you can tell similar stories of challenges, changes, and concurrent circumstances. Resilience and flexibility became the mantra for 2020 and now 2021.

In this world of uncertainty and unpredictability, what a true privilege it is to remind our students that while everything else changes, our God does not. His love is unchanging, his presence unending, and his protection unwavering.

It is because of those blessings that Michigan Lutheran Seminary exists to remind students daily that their hope and life remain secure in our changeless God. It is our prayer and effort to encourage and equip many of those to proclaim that message in congregations and schools like yours that many more may rest secure in our changeless God. For that reason we thank the Lord that over 50% of the 2020 MLS graduating class has continued their education at Martin Luther College!

*You will be secure, because there is hope;
you will look about you and take your rest in safety. (Job 11:18).*

Loving and serving Him,

Rev. Mark Luetzow, *President*



On February 19, students had an opportunity to hear from Pastor Aaron Robinson about reaching out to all nations. Pastor Robinson currently serves at Fairview Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and will be transitioning to Martin Luther College this summer where he will serve as the Cultural Diversity Coordinator and professor of English.

TARGETED GRANTS



Do you have a student that has gifts in music or is recognized by his/her peers for their leadership qualities? Are they the first in their family or their congregation to attend a preparatory high school?

Do they have obvious ministry qualities that set them above their peers as a potential pastor or teacher? MLS has developed a targeted grant program that seeks to encourage those students to consider using those gifts in the ministry. These grants will be given in addition to the financial aid that is awarded based on need. But we need your help identifying those students. If you know someone that meets these criteria, please share that name with the MLS Admissions Counselor, **Pastor Ross Chartrand** (rsc@mlsem.org or 989.522.5111). Thank you!

MLS MENTAL HEALTH RESPONSE TO COVID

Recognizing the impact of COVID-19 on our students, the administration, faculty, and staff of MLS has worked very hard to concentrate on the mental wellness of the young people in our care. During virtual learning, the faculty made it a priority to stay in touch with students even outside of normal learning experiences, whether it was impromptu check-ins, organized virtual activities for the whole student body, or continued mental health counseling by the deans and Christian Family Solutions (CFS) counselors.

As we began in-person instruction again in the fall, the governor of Michigan highly recommended that all high school students go through a mental wellness screening process. At MLS, we followed this recommendation and every student on campus filled out a mental wellness questionnaire and went through a face-to-face follow-up session with our CFS counselor, **Kent Robinson**. This process provided us with the opportunity to have a real check-in with our students to see how they were doing.



In addition, this school year our faculty spent time discussing “Mental Wellness and School Culture.” These discussions took place formally in our professional development sessions held throughout the school year and were led by Counselor Kent Robinson and **Dean David Koehler**. The sessions were an opportunity to evaluate how our institutional systems, policies, and procedures affected our students.

At MLS, we are striving to care for our students spiritually, academically, socially, and emotionally. Our response to COVID-19 regarding the mental wellness of our students has been one way we are trying to serve the precious souls entrusted to us by our loving God.

SEM...NO, S.T.E.M.



STEM is a brand new course at MLS! The goal is to combine science, technology, engineering, and mathematics together in the form of a project or task. All the conceptual tools the students have added to their intellectual repertoire over the years are applied in tangible ways. Students often come into class excited about the next thing they need to figure out for their project.

Each unit of study begins with several days introducing the students to the topic and showing them how it works and where it is used in the real world. Then they are given a task, goal, or challenge in which they need to apply this new knowledge. This first topic is hydraulics: mechanical movement caused by the movement of water. The students are given the goal of designing, manufacturing, and assembling a hydraulic machine that is capable of elevating and moving a can 6 inches away from its starting point. Most groups have more than doubled that distance with their machines!



WRESTLERS WIN DISTRICTS



Congratulations to the MLS wrestling team for capturing a team district championship! They reached the regional final for the first time since 1992.



Sophomore **Evan Wakefield** (St. Bartholomew, Kawkawlin) qualified for the MHSAA wrestling state finals by placing 3rd place in the 171lb weight class at regionals on March 27.



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