

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

11831 N Seminary Dr • Mequon WI 53092



December 4, 2024

Dear Brother in Christ,

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (WLS) and the Board for Home Missions (BHM) have been working together for many years to prepare mission-minded, outreach-oriented pastors through the Vicar in a Mission Setting (ViMS) program. I thank God for this partnership and for the many blessings the Lord has bestowed on our church body through it.

I also thank God for the pastors and congregations who apply for a vicar through the ViMS program. We know the time and energy you expend in completing the application and thinking through the logistics of working with a vicar. Both the seminary and the BHM consider you an integral part of the ViMS program.

We come to you as partners in the Lord's work, with a request. The vicar program is expensive. We are doing our best to keep the costs down. Unfortunately, health insurance and housing haven't played along. Increases in those two areas have had a major impact on the overall cost of the program.

Both the seminary and the BHM regularly share the story of the ViMS program with God's people across the synod, inviting and encouraging gifts to support it. The saints have responded positively. The generous gifts received through those efforts, however, have not allowed us to place as many vicars in mission settings as we would like. We are asking you to think about increasing the amount you contribute to program as an investment in the formation of mission-minded pastors.

The cost of participating in the 2025–2026 vicar program will be about \$48,000 for those who are able to provide full support. We understand the challenges of maintaining programs in a mission-minded congregation. At the same time, we expect that those who have experienced the joys and blessings of training vicars will be eager to dedicate a substantial portion of their budget to support our common efforts and ensure that there will be more vicars serving in mission settings. While the congregation's contribution is not the primary factor considered by the committee that reviews the applications, it is a factor. Please consider the following suggested minimums, based on how many vicars the congregation has had in the last ten years:

- If the congregation has had 1–2 vicars in the last ten years, please consider a minimum contribution of \$21,000.
- If the congregation has had 3–5 vicars in the last ten years, please consider a minimum contribution of \$25,000.
- If the congregation has had 6–8 vicars in the last ten years, please consider a minimum contribution of \$29,000.
- If the congregation has had 9–10 vicars in the last ten years, please consider a minimum contribution of \$33,000.

We are thankful for the congregations that go beyond the minimum suggested contribution. If that describes your congregation, please continue along the path you have established. Don't focus on the minimums, but on the Lord's gracious provision and his unfailing promises. Think of it this way: Your increased contribution will

allow more vicars to serve in outreach-focused congregations learning from mission-minded pastors, not only this year, but in the following years as well. What a blessing that would be!

At the time of this writing, there are 37 men who anticipate presenting themselves for service as vicars from August 1, 2025, to July 31, 2026. That's down three from last year, but it remains seven more than the average vicar class over the last eight years. Looking ahead, the class that will serve as vicars during the 2026–2027 school year could have as many as 47 men. We thank God for answering the prayers of his people for more workers for his harvest. We want to have as many men as possible serving as vicars in a mission setting. We think it's an important investment in our future pastors and in our synod.

Thank you for prayerfully considering our request for an even greater partnership in the formation of pastors who are well prepared to reach the lost with the gospel. Please share this letter with the leaders of your congregation.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Earle D. Treptow". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Earle D. Treptow, president