

January 22, 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 gifted pastors and their supportive congregations who participate in the ViMS program. Both the seminary and the BHM see you as an integral part of this work.

We come to you as partners in the Lord's work, with an important matter for you and your congregation to consider as you apply for a vicar. The vicar program is an expensive proposition. Even as we work on ways to limit the costs, financial realities have resulted in rising costs. Both the BHM and WLS have made a significant investment in the training of men who are eager and able to reach out with the gospel of Christ.

At the time of this writing, there are 40 men who anticipate presenting themselves for service as vicars from August 1, 2024, to July 31, 2025. (Last year 29 men were assigned as vicars, with 15 assigned to mission settings.) We thank God for his answer to the prayers of his people for more workers for his harvest. This is a year where more men will be serving in mission setting and we want to ensure that we have the funds to support this valuable 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 to our requests. The gifts received through those efforts, however, will not provide enough to support this larger class (and another one following it, Lord willing). Both WLS and the BHM are happy to continue to invest in the formation of pastors who see outreach as central to every congregation's ministry. We are asking you to join us in doing the best you can to provide financial support for the program.

The cost of participating in the 2023–2024 vicar program will be \$47,280, 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. Please consider the following suggested minimums, based on how many vicars the congregation has had in the last ten years:

Vicars serving the congregation in the last ten years	Suggested minimum contribution
1–3	\$14,500+
4–6	\$19,000+
7–10	\$24,000+

We are thankful for the congregations that go beyond these minimums. 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. Your increased support 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.

Thank you for reading this letter and prayerfully considering our request. Please share this 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, flowing style.

Earle D. Treptow