

A “LAY SEMINARY” DEVELOPS, GROWS, AND ENDURES:  
A CENTURY OF WELS CAMPUS MINISTRY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-  
MADISON

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## ABSTRACT

September 26, 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of WELS campus ministry in the United States. Over this century, WELS campus ministry has developed into a substantial ministry that serves collegiates at numerous public universities all across America. The synod's oldest, largest, and most prominent campus ministry during this span of time has been the campus ministry at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Madison, Wisconsin. When WELS campus ministry began 100 years ago, it began in Madison. This history tells the story of both the humble beginnings of WELS campus ministry and the work which has been carried out at this particular institution to ten decades worth of Badgers. Throughout the history of Calvary Lutheran Chapel and Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel, the students, the ones who were meant to be served, embraced a spirit of leadership and service and took ownership of this ministry. The model example set by these students underscores the ongoing vital importance of the campus ministry work that our synod does. Campus ministries not only serve the student during spiritually tumultuous years, but also these ministries equip the students to be confident witnesses and passionate church leaders—both before and after the diploma.

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*“Why stay? Over the years people have asked me why I’ve stayed so long. My response: “I can’t think of a better place to be.” It is a tremendous honor and privilege that the Lord has given me to bring the good news of Jesus to young adults like you. You are filled with hope and life and are open to knowing about God and Jesus and his Word. There’s freedom to worship in different ways at the Chapel and there’s a spirit of bringing friends to hear about Jesus.*

*My plans in retirement are to go to pastoral conferences throughout the Synod and identify churches near universities and help them get on campus. I also plan to research our campus ministry history. In 2020 it will be the WELS 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in campus ministry in the USA. And it started at UW-Madison.”*

This work is dedicated to the memory of “PT,” Thomas Harry Trapp (1949-2019)  
Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel campus pastor emeritus,  
staunch proponent of the mission “to know Christ and make him known on campus,”  
and friend.

On April 25, 2017, a few months before his retirement, “PT” (as he was affectionately known) gave a talk to the students at Chapel following one of Chapel’s 9 PM Wednesday Vespers services. While the students enjoyed a snack of ice cream they listened to PT reflect on his memories from 38 years of service as the WELS University of Wisconsin-Madison campus pastor. The italicized lines printed above are taken verbatim from the outline PT typed up for his address that evening.

## INTRODUCTION

Steve and Chris are members of Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel in Madison, Wisconsin. They have much in common. Both are in their mid-thirties, both are UW-Madison grads, both of them put down roots in Madison following graduation, both of them are married with growing families, and both of them serve on the governing board of the Chapel. At the Chapel's August 2018 governing board meeting the 10 or 12 men present took turns, one-by-one, and introduced themselves for the sake of the new vicar present at this meeting.<sup>1</sup> They shared some information about themselves: how long they've been affiliated with the Chapel and what they feel makes this church (ministry) so special that it has become and remained their church home long after their college years.

The responses that Steve and Chris gave to this simple introduction activity have resonated with me long after that August afternoon. They considered the Chapel (and campus ministries in general) to be like a "worker training school for future church leaders." They appreciated the Christian love and service the Chapel gave to them during their years as students and now a decade later they willingly and gladly continue to gather at 220 West Gilman Street as they lead and serve the ministry that served them not long ago.

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1. It was a privilege to serve my vicar year at Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel during the 2018-19 school year.

In preparation for this paper, I reached out to Steve and Chris and asked them to elaborate on their “lay seminary”<sup>2</sup> comments from over a year ago. Chris noted that the Chapel actively strives to impact students in such a way that it has a “ripple effect” long after they leave Madison.

We have focused for some time on the Chapel being a training ground to help develop lay leaders that go out into the world and use the gifts and experiences they develop at the Chapel to become leaders in their home church, wherever that may be. We promote this concept to the synod often and really believe the Chapel does a great job training students on the importance of church involvement and leadership through personal and group spiritual growth, stewardship, relationships, and activities.<sup>3</sup>

Steve elaborated on this “training ground” idea and added valuable insight:

Campus ministry is a natural sending ministry. Students come together from all over the world for a few highly formative years and then disperse once again all over the world with their newfound talents and abilities. By harnessing our window of opportunity with these students and training them to be Christian servant leaders, we can naturally send out Christ's ambassadors to the world year after year. These are the future lay leaders of Christ's church. Students come to college ready to learn. It's also a very important development period where they start building the foundational layer of who they will be as adults. Making their spiritual training a “13th credit” fits in naturally with their growth and development during this period. University students are also immersed in dozens of new ideas, concepts, and worldviews which generally makes them open to expanding their horizons. This gives us a great opportunity to showcase the radical, transformational gospel news for the life-changing message it truly is. Personally most of my growth as a Christian leader grew out of my experiences at Chapel.<sup>4</sup>

I didn't possess much knowledge of our synod's campus ministry prior to my vicar assignment, let alone to see these ministries as a machine that churns out faithful and committed laity. As far as I knew, WELS campus ministry existed merely as a “spiritual placeholder” for

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2. This phrase (which also serves as the title for this paper) is not original. Steve or Chris may have used that actual term at this meeting (as I draw on memory), but I also came across this clever phrase in scattered pages and notes written by and belonging to Pastor Tom Trapp.

3. Chris, Interview, October 7, 2019.

4. Steve, Interview. October 7, 2019.

WELS students at the spiritual battleground that is college—to bridge the gap between the first 18 years of Christian education and church attendance and settling down in a new city with a new job and a new church home (provided the individual doesn't fall away during their years at college).

For fear of stating the obvious, college can be a great threat to the young Christian. At many colleges, professors reject Christianity and teach their material accordingly. Once busyness and stress set in, the student is forced to prioritize his or her time. For many, the hour spent at church can be repurposed for much-needed extra sleep on Sunday mornings. Party culture is alluring and less-than-sanctified temptations abound. But what also is simultaneously happening is that students are getting their first taste of independence, and included in this newfound independence is a freedom to choose where to go to church, when to go to church, or to not go at all. Mom and Dad aren't around during these years to drive you to church or nudge you out of bed on Sunday morning. It's on you, the student, to tend to your spiritual welfare during your time at a secular university, and it can easily fall by the wayside.

So campus ministries exist to help make this transition to independence easy and convenient. "Don't have a car? We'll come to you on campus and meet for Bible study. We'll give you rides to church. Feeling homesick or tired of the caf food already? We'll serve you a delicious home-cooked meal. Worried about making friends or feeling lonely? We get together and do fun events from time to time, so you can gather and grow with fellow Christian college students just like you." If a WELS student left college still a Christian and still WELS, then the campus ministry had succeeded. That was the extent of my understanding of the role of WELS campus ministry at secular universities.

While my “placeholder” assessment might not have been totally off-base, it certainly didn’t give our synod’s campus ministries the full recognition and credit they’re due. My assessment didn’t account for something bigger taking place at these humble gatherings. That’s why the comments made by Steve and Chris (two individuals who were greatly blessed and influenced by Chapel’s ministry) were so eye-opening. They helped me to see how our campus ministries (and especially the Chapel) act as a vital stepping stone in the Christian growth and development of our synod’s young adults. These perspectives were valuable to hear at the onset of my year of service to the Chapel.

Even though Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel of Madison is unique in that it has always existed as one of the WELS’ few full-time campus ministries (and today, the synod’s only), the view of WELS campus ministry as a sending ministry is not unique to the Chapel. For example, at the 1987 WELS synod convention the delegates present resolved that “the WELS reaffirm its long-standing commitment to evangelize the college campuses of North America.”<sup>5</sup> In conjunction with this, the floor also acknowledged that “[campus ministries] serve as *‘worker training’ programs for the Synod’s future lay leaders*” and that “campus ministries...send them (students) out into WELS congregations where dozens are now giving a lifetime of service and financial support to the work of WELS.”<sup>6</sup>

At that convention, there were a number of memorials presented with regard to campus ministry and its importance. The synod at large was aware of the important work being done by campus ministries around America (and they especially noted the work that was being carried

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5. *Proceedings of the 49th Biennial Convention of the WELS*, August 3-7, 1987, 75.

6. *Proceedings of the 1987 Convention*, 76, emphasis added.



out at the two full-time ministries of the time: UW-Madison & UW-Oshkosh).<sup>7</sup> The attendees may well have left this convention with a renewed appreciation, awareness, and devotion to the work their synod conducted on college campuses. One can only imagine how delighted they would be today to hear about how this ministry has blossomed over the years. Today there are over 7,000 colleges, universities, and tech schools in the United States and Canada with a WELS campus ministry contact person. WELS also has a campus ministry contact person in each of the 50 states.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to these impressive statistics, our synod has another reason to be joyful. September 26, 2020 marks the 100 year anniversary of WELS campus ministry. The Lord has blessed this arm of our synodical missions to grow and develop into what they are today. Our synod's campus ministry has been a blessing to countless individuals over these 100 years. Some can look back on their time spent at the local campus ministry and see how God used that to keep them rooted and firm in the faith during college. Many have campus ministry to thank for providing them with lifelong friendships (and for some, spouses!)

As the WELS celebrates this happy occasion and marvels at how impressive this whole ministry has grown to be, some might be curious to know how it all began. This paper is for those individuals. WELS campus ministry began on September 26, 1920 when Pastor Adolph Haentzschel led the first service of the Calvary Student's Mission at the Wheeler School of Music in Madison, Wisconsin. This ministry began at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and throughout this century our synod's campus work in Madison has become and remains its most

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7. For example, the convention of 1987 acknowledged that "the rate of adult confirmands in our Madison and Oshkosh ministries is actually higher than that of the typical WELS congregation" (*Proceedings of the 1987 Convention*, 76).

8. Ginny Mundstock, Interview, October 12, 2019. Ginny works as a Missions Liaison, as well as in Promotions/Campus Ministry at the WELS Center for Mission and Ministry in Pewaukee, Wisconsin.

prominent campus ministry. This work will trace the history of the ministry done at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to 100 years' worth of Badgers.<sup>9</sup>

While these few pages cannot tell 100 years of the Madison Student Mission's<sup>10</sup> history in all of its fullness, the goal of this work is to give the reader a sketch of where and how WELS campus ministry all began. The purpose of this work is to celebrate this particular ministry's century of existence, to show its humble beginnings, to draw attention to the challenges it has had to overcome, to recognize the tireless efforts of its students, pastors, and members to sustain this mission, and to show how our synod's largest and oldest "lay seminary" developed, grew, and now endures to this very day—all by the grace of God and commitment of his servants.

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9. It should be noted here at the onset that Calvary and Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel also enjoy ministering to students who attend the other two institutions of higher education in Madison: Madison Area Technical College (MATC) and Edgewood College. Students of these institutions have been a blessing to this campus ministry, and vice versa. That being said and understood, this work will exclusively focus on the main institution that Calvary and Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel seek to minister to: the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

10. Proceedings, reports, memorials, and records have used a variety of different terms over time to refer to the campus ministry at UW-Madison that the Wisconsin Synod (WELS) was involved with. This might give confusion to the reader of this work. Please note that "Madison Student's Mission," "Calvary Student's Mission," "Calvary Lutheran University Church," "Calvary Lutheran University Chapel," "Calvary Lutheran Chapel and Student Center," et. al, are all synonymous. Likewise, "Calvary Joint Mission Board," "Calvary Student Mission Board," "Madison Student Mission Board," et al., are synonymous as well.

## THE 1920s: THE WISCONSIN SYNOD'S FIRST "LAY SEMINARY" IS BORN

Calvary's opening service in 1920 (mentioned briefly in the introduction) is what the WELS formally recognizes as its beginning in campus ministry. However, this was not the Synodical Conference's first attempt at starting a Lutheran campus ministry for the UW-Madison students. As early as 1901, the Missouri Synod began exploring the potential of campus ministry in Madison. These initial efforts will not be included in this history, and the reason is twofold: no significant progress was attained and sustained prior to 1920, and the Wisconsin Synod did not play a part in these particular attempts to create a lasting campus ministry in Madison.<sup>11</sup>

There is, however, one piece of pre-1920s material that would be worth acknowledging at this time. The September 9, 1917 issue of the *Milwaukee Free Press* noted that "a campaign to raise \$100,000 to be used in the erection of a Lutheran Memorial church at Madison for university students, is to be launched by Lutheran congregations throughout the state."<sup>12</sup> This was being spearheaded by the General Council (of which the Wisconsin Synod was not in fellowship). The article reported that "[since there were not] sufficient members of many of the individual synods [of the General Council] to establish a church [student church] for each synod, it must be an inter-synodical proposition, to which all contribute for the good of all."<sup>13</sup>

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11. Pages 1-2 of Martin Westerhaus's "Material For a History of the WELS Campus Ministry" (WLS Essay File, 1979) details some of those earliest Lutheran efforts, including those that took place at UW-Madison. The first page of Richard Balge's "An Account of WELS Campus Ministry in Madison, Wisconsin" (WLS Essay File, 1984) is informative on this matter as well. Richard Balge served as the first campus pastor of Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel & Student Center, the WELS UW-Madison campus ministry from 1964-present. His ministry will be discussed in the section of this work titled "1964-1969: The Wisconsin Synod's First "Lay Seminary" is Reborn.

12. This newspaper quote is found inside of J.B., "Lutheran Memorial Church for Students at Madison" *The Northwestern Lutheran* 4, no. 19 (7 Oct 1917): 146.

13. This newspaper quote is found inside of J.B., "Lutheran Memorial Church for Students at Madison" *The Northwestern Lutheran* 4, no. 19 (7 Oct 1917): 146.

This *Milwaukee Free Press* article caught the attention of one of the contributors of *The Northwestern Lutheran*.<sup>14</sup> The October 7, 1917 issue of *The Northwestern Lutheran* featured a Wisconsin Synod response to this campaign and proposal that the General Council was striving to carry out. In this response, the writer stated the following.

There would, no doubt, be room for the work of a students' pastor among our young people attending the university, and we hope that someday we will see one stationed in Madison; but such a pastor would have to be a man who truly represents us in order that the years of careful training received by our children will not be wasted through influences that we are seeking to combat at home.<sup>15</sup>

The Wisconsin Synod was cognizant of the need for such a ministry and desired that it might one day come to be, but in no circumstance would they be moved to abandon principles of fellowship in order to make it happen. While such a proposal might have seemed exciting and enticing at the time, the Wisconsin Synod, above all, sought to remain faithful and committed to Scripture's principles concerning fellowship, doctrine, and practice. One can admire their unwavering devotion to the teachings of Scripture in this matter.

Two years later the Wisconsin Synod found its appropriate opportunity to enter campus ministry. At its 1919 district convention, the South Wisconsin District of the Missouri Synod resolved to begin a student mission in Madison and to call a pastor to serve there. The district

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14. First published in 1914, *The Northwestern Lutheran* was a Wisconsin Synod periodical for over 80 years. It was rebranded as *Forward in Christ* in 2000, which exists to this day.

15. J.B., "Lutheran Memorial Church for Students at Madison" *The Northwestern Lutheran* 4, no. 19 (7 Oct 1917): 146.

estimated that about 350 Synodical Conference<sup>16</sup> students were attending the University of Wisconsin at that time.<sup>17</sup>

How exactly did the Wisconsin Synod come to join in this work? A historical booklet published at the ministry's 25th anniversary recounted its inception. "When this action became known, the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, which also had a considerable number of students at the University, made the proposal that it be permitted to share in the undertaking and to assume half of the expenses that it would involve."<sup>18</sup> The South Wisconsin District agreed to conduct this work together with the Wisconsin Synod. This campus ministry would go by the name "Calvary," and the call process for the mission's first pastor was soon underway.

After a number of returned calls, the synods found their man in Adolph Haentzschel. Haentzschel was teaching English and Greek at St. Paul's College in Concordia, Missouri, when he accepted the call to serve in April 1920. He arrived in Madison on August 1. Something that likely caught the attention of the mission board in the calling process was the fact that Haentzschel had campus ministry experience. While teaching full-time at St. Paul's, Haentzschel would commute 70 miles east on Sunday mornings to conduct services at the University of Missouri at Columbia for its students. With experience in teaching and preaching at different universities, Haentzschel appeared to be a very apt candidate for this new mission start.

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16. The Synodical Conference was an entity of independent Lutheran synods in America. The Conference was formed in 1872 and it dissolved in 1967. The Wisconsin and Missouri Synods (both members of the Conference, alongside a rotating cast of other synods) were in fellowship from 1869 until said fellowship was suspended in 1961. The Wisconsin Synod left the Synodical Conference in 1963.

17. Balge, "An Account of WELS Campus Ministry in Madison, Wisconsin," 1.

18. William Burhop, "Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Calvary Lutheran University Church," 5 May 1946, box 836, file folder Calvary Lutheran Student Center, WELS Synod Archives, 2. Burhop was Haentzschel's successor, the second campus pastor at Calvary. His ministry and time at Calvary will be discussed shortly.

The first service of Calvary, this new Lutheran mission for UW-Madison students, was held approximately two months after Haentzschel arrived. On September 26, 1920, worship was held at Wheeler School of Music (or Wheeler Music Hall), located at 510 State Street (near the corner of State and Gilman streets). Haentzschel's notes record an attendance of 48 at that first service.<sup>19</sup> From there, this new ministry gradually continued to grow under Haentzschel's leadership. Calvary would continue to hold their services at Wheeler for a monthly rent of \$60.00. Worship drew 80-90 souls each Sunday. By the end of the 1920-21 school year, the number of students participating in Calvary's ministry numbered 151. As Martin Westerhaus rightly mentioned in his history of WELS campus ministry, "Wouldn't any Mission Board like to have all their missions get off to a start like that?"<sup>20</sup>

As students began to pack into this modest rented space, a spirit of leadership and zeal began to kindle among Calvary's students. A student council was formed in January 1921. This group recognized early on that this ministry would greatly benefit from having (in addition to its own worship space) a "community house" of sorts—a place where students could gather during the week to study and socialize. Pastor Haentzschel, in the March 6, 1921 issue of *The Northwestern Lutheran*, stated:

If the full possibilities of the work are to be realized, it must have its own quarters. The synods concerned will be asked, this summer, to take the necessary steps. Probably a community house with a chapel would best answer the purpose. Such a building would become the center about which the church life and much of the social life of Lutheran students would revolve. It would offer them a reading room with Lutheran periodicals, a library with books setting forth and defending the truth, and rooms for rest and recreation. It would be a place where they could become acquainted with one another, where they would be sure of a welcome and of aid and advice at any time—as near an approach to home as possible. By containing rooms to be rented out to students, the house would become self-supporting. Such an arrangement would present wonderful opportunities to

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19. William Burhop, "Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Calvary Lutheran University Church," 2.

20. Westerhaus, "Material For A History of WELS Campus Ministry," 7.

combat hostile influences, to keep Lutheran students under Lutheran influence, and, with the help of God, to keep them true to their Church and their faith.<sup>21</sup>

To help make this dream a reality, the student council hit the ground running. At the time, there was some kind of “subscription” system among the students (a means by which financial support came to Calvary). In the few years that followed, the fundraising and subscriptions among students would only continue to gain more momentum. In William Burhop’s “Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Calvary Lutheran University Church,” he noted, “With heightened enthusiasm the students now increased their contributions and subscriptions among themselves, setting as their own goal the amount of money which would be needed to furnish the sanctuary of the chapel in an appropriate manner.”<sup>22</sup> With the “congregation” essentially consisting of only university students, it was up to them to steer this ship right from the start. Their efforts and fervor to lead and promote this ministry, not to mention raising the funds amongst themselves to help make this chapel and community house a reality, were nothing shy of remarkable.

Yet remarkable as they were, it soon became obvious that college students could not single-handedly fund this entire project. By the start of the 1922-23 school year, notice was being disseminated to the Synodical Conference at large to request funds and consider supporting this budding mission opportunity.<sup>23</sup> In December 1922, a Calvary student named Gerald Jenny contributed an excellent article to *The Northwestern Lutheran*, in which he detailed the happenings of the student mission, explained the dangers of secular college (from a student’s

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21. Adolph Haentzschel, “Work Among Lutheran University Students,” *The Northwestern Lutheran* 8, no. 5 (6 March 1921): 74.

22. William Burhop, “Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Calvary Lutheran University Church,” 3.

23. C. Gausewitz et. al, “Campaign For Work Among Our Students At Madison,” *The Northwestern Lutheran* 9, No. 19 (17 September 1922): 301. The Synodical Conference’s Joint Board for University Mission at Madison requests funds be mailed to support this mission.

perspective), and demonstrated the urgency in building and developing the Calvary Chapel. In closing, he powerfully stated, “Our young men and women need you today. You may need them tomorrow.”<sup>24</sup>

The Lord blessed these initiatives and pleas, for in 1924 Calvary’s Joint Mission Board was able to purchase a plot of land at 713 State Street on the east end of UW-Madison’s campus. The plot of land was purchased for \$43,085.<sup>25</sup> Ground was broken in the summer of 1925, and the cornerstone was laid in November of that year. In short order, this ministry would enjoy the blessings of having its very own worship center and student center tailored to meet its needs.

While the building project began to take shape, Calvary’s ministry continued to hum along at the rented Wheeler Hall on State Street. Bible class was held on Sunday mornings before worship. Additionally, cost suppers<sup>26</sup> and social hours held at Calvary were met with consistent attendance and success. Another noteworthy item from this time (1924) was Haentzschel accepting a part-time teaching position at the university. He began teaching physiology in 1924, and he would continue teaching there for over a decade.

Richard Balge noted Haentzschel’s motives for taking this position.

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24. Gerald Jenny, “Student Mission At Madison,” *The Northwestern Lutheran* 9, no. 25 (10 December 1922): 393. Jenny stated that a lasting ministry was needed at UW-Madison to combat the effects of religious indifference, heathen lecturers, and toleration. With this statement, Jenny appears to be saying that, “If you want (or, since we’ll need) people to carry on and lead the church after you, do your part now to nurture it and sustain it before the wick smolders and dies out.”

25. According to [usinflationcalculator.com](http://usinflationcalculator.com), this plot of land would be worth over \$640,000 in 2020 dollars.

26. This history will make frequent mention of “cost suppers.” This was a staple of Calvary and Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel’s ministries. These meals were first born out of necessity. For a time, UW-Madison’s dining hall did not offer meal service on Sundays. Offering a meal to the students accomplished two purposes: the student could be fed and the campus ministry could get its “foot in the door” with these students and perhaps spark their interest in the other, more spiritual aspects of its ministry. With expanded cafeteria service today, these cost suppers function more as an outreach tool than solving a campus problem. Today, Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel offers “Triple Dollar Dinner” on Monday nights, where for \$3 a student can receive a complete, home-cooked meal. A brief devotion usually follows the meal.



His reasons for accepting teaching assignments in the university were twofold. From the minutes of the mission board we learn that he began to teach in an effort to overcome financial difficulties. From his own words we also learn that he saw it as a way to become more directly involved in the university, to learn more about the context in which students were living, to help win the confidence of those whom he was serving in his ministry.<sup>27</sup>

Pastor Haentzschel's presence in the UW-Madison classroom, coupled with having three children attending the University, allowed him to be well in-tune with the attitudes, feelings, and personalities of the college students.<sup>28</sup> Without question, his immersion on campus had to benefit him in ministering to his students at Calvary. Haentzschel's teaching at the University will be discussed further in the next section.

September 26, 1926 was a very happy and special day for Calvary Lutheran. Six years to the day after they first gathered for worship in Wheeler Hall, their first worship center and student center was dedicated and ready for use. W. Dallmann, the 2nd Vice President of the Missouri Synod, and C. Gausewitz, the President of the Synodical Conference, delivered dedicatory sermons. Fellow Madison area Synodical Conference congregations joined the celebration. After years of using a less-than-ideal facility and campaigning for funds, Calvary would now be able to conduct their ministry in a beautiful edifice equipped with plenty of space for the social components of Calvary's mission.

This new Chapel, located at 713 State Street (a few blocks closer to the heart of campus than Wheeler Hall), was designed in 14th century Gothic style architecture. The structure was built in an L-shape. One wing was the worship sanctuary, which had capacity for 300. The other wing consisted of Pastor Haentzschel's parsonage as well as rooms for studying and social

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27. Balge, "An Account of Campus Ministry in Madison, Wisconsin," 3.

28. The 1926-27 school year was when Haentzschel had 3 of his 4 children attending the university at once. Edith was a junior that year, Edna a sophomore, and Wilfred a freshman.

activities. Stone fireplaces created an intimate environment for peaceful study and serenity from the stresses of student life. The basement contained a kitchen and a large open area for socializing. A 70-foot tower attached to Calvary was described by *The Capital Times* as “unusually attractive” and “one of the most striking pieces of church architecture in the city.”<sup>29</sup>

Financial reports on the cost of this project vary, but the final cost of the entire project appears to have been approximately \$145,000. The equity stake in this facility and ministry was divided as follows: Wisconsin Synod 41%, South Wisconsin District of the Missouri Synod 39%, North Wisconsin District of the Missouri Synod 20%.

Perhaps the most meaningful financial statistic from this building project is found among Calvary’s students. On the Friday before the dedication, Haentzschel told *The Capital Times* that the students themselves contributed \$5,000 to furnish the sanctuary.<sup>30</sup> Burhop, in his history of Calvary, expanded on Haentzschel’s comment from that day’s newspaper, “The furnishings in the sanctuary of the chapel—the beautiful stone altar, wainscoting, pulpit, and lectern—as well as the landscaping, is a noble monument to the students, who succeeded in collecting over \$7,000.”<sup>31</sup>

As the reader can see, these figures are not in agreement. In either case, these students should be commended for this exemplary model of leadership and stewardship. These contributions, in today’s dollar figures, would be the equivalent of raising *between \$70,000 and*

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29. “Completion of New Calvary Chapel Reward of 6 Years Work.” *The Capital Times*, September 24, 1926.

30. “Completion of New Calvary Chapel Reward of 6 Years Work.” *The Capital Times*, September 24, 1926.

31. William Burhop, “Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Calvary Lutheran University Church,” 4.

\$100,000.<sup>32</sup> Even more meaningful than the dollar amount was the spirit behind it. Moved out of love for their Savior, zeal for this budding ministry, and thankfulness for this new facility, the students single-handedly funded gifts for Calvary that would adorn Calvary for years to come.

From its earliest and humblest beginnings, Calvary's students voluntarily and joyfully displayed enthusiasm towards this ministry and the leadership of it. Between fundraising campaigns and planning activities<sup>33</sup> to "the little things" like faithful attendance and mentioning Calvary around campus, the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods owe a debt of gratitude to these students for playing no small part in helping to establish their inaugural campus ministry program.

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32. The inflation figure was taken from the online "US Inflation Calculator," <https://www.usinflationcalculator.com>.

33. Haentzschel mentioned to *The Capital Times* that "we let the students themselves run all of the social activities." ("Completion of New Calvary Chapel Reward of 6 Years Work." *The Capital Times*, September 24, 1926.)

## THE 1930s: CALVARY'S FIRST "CHANGING OF THE GUARDS"

As this history of the Wisconsin Synod's Madison campus ministry is recounted, the reader will notice that there will be some years and some periods of time with little to report (in terms of historically significant events). It would appear that the late 1920s and early 1930s were mellow years of ministry at Calvary. Calmness, routine, consistency, and lack of controversy are all blessings to Christ's church on earth and reasons for which to give him thanks. That being said, two events of this decade merit a closer look: the matter of Haentzschel's teaching at the University and the changing of Calvary's pastorate.

The stock market crash of 1929 decimated the finances of millions, and the Wisconsin Synod was not immune to the aftermath of this calamity. The synod had a myriad of new burdens to navigate as a result of the Depression; included in that was the funding of various home missions. The Madison Student's Mission (Calvary) was under the umbrella of synod missions, and a portion of Haentzschel's salary was paid from those synod monies allocated to the Mission. So naturally, when synod's missions got a smaller cut of the pie, so too did Haentzschel, unfortunately. From 1931-33, Wisconsin Synod convention proceedings stated that \$2,000 was allocated to go towards Haentzschel's salary (\$1,000/fiscal year).<sup>34</sup> But then, that number dropped to \$600 for the 1933-34 year, a sizeable decrease.<sup>35</sup>

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34. *Proceedings of the Twenty-first Biennial Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States*, August 12-18, 1931, 122.

35. *Report of the Twenty-second Meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States*, August 2-9, 1933, 149.

As mentioned earlier, teaching part-time at the University proved to be a blessing to Haentzschel. In addition to using his sessions on campus to better acquaint himself with Madison students, this arrangement also gave him financial subsidy. There is nothing written to suggest that this teaching had a significant adverse effect on his ministry at Calvary, and had the Great Depression not occurred the matter would have likely remained negligible (he taught at UW-Madison for 10 years, after all, without it being questioned).

But with synod funds strained and depleted as a result of the Depression, Haentzschel's stewardship of time and talents was called into question. Balge described the issue as follows:

It was against this background of economic woe that the mission boards questioned why the "student pastor," ...needed a paid secretary if he had time to teach in the university. However, there was also a question of principle: whether a pastor should be gainfully employed in a second, a "secular" calling. In June of 1935 the South Wisconsin District of the Missouri Synod concluded that since he was to be a full-time pastor and his salary was adequate, Pastor Haentzschel should refrain from teaching.<sup>36</sup>

Evidently the issue came down to this: "If we're paying Haentzschel to be full-time campus pastor but in reality he's shared-time, and money is being spent on a secretary (for him) to assist him in his work (when he isn't even giving the fullest of his time to Calvary), then something's not adding up." One could see why the Missouri Synod (also reeling from the effects of the Great Depression) would object to Haentzschel's practices.

But the Missouri Synod would not be alone in this sentiment. At their 1935 synod convention, the Wisconsin Synod "heartily endorsed the stand taken by our representatives on the Madison Student Mission Board, because we hold it to be a matter of principle that a minister of the Gospel should not at the same time serve as an instructor in a public institution of

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36. Balge, "An Account of WELS Campus Ministry in Madison, Wisconsin," 3.

learning.”<sup>37</sup> For both financial reasons and reasons of principle, Haentzschel’s days as a part-time UW-Madison professor were numbered as a result of these verdicts.

As it would turn out, Haentzschel’s days at Calvary, in general, would be numbered. In the fall of 1936 he was extended a call to teach philosophy at Valparaiso University, and he accepted it. He preached his farewell sermon on January 24, 1937. In his final sermon as Calvary’s student pastor, he urged the Calvary faithful to “go to church, hear the word of God. Do not let yourself be separated from the church and Christ.”<sup>38</sup>

This entire matter could, in hindsight, appear as a blemish or disappointment in the history of Calvary. Was there tension between Haentzschel and the synods/Calvary Mission Board who opposed his university position? Did frustration over this lead to Haentzschel’s departure from the Calvary mission? Correspondence between these parties and Haentzschel’s personal feelings aren’t provided in written records and histories, and speculation in this would be fruitless.

Instead, it would be better to focus on what has been recorded on Haentzschel. Speaking to *The Capital Times* in some of his final days at Calvary, Haentzschel looked back fondly on his 16 years of ministry in Madison. “My stay here has been a happy one and I have been well repaid for all my efforts. The friendships I have made have been dear to me.”<sup>39</sup> Gerald Jenny, in the 1922 *Northwestern Lutheran* article (referenced earlier) said of Haentzschel, “From the start he has proved himself the faithful minister, and we regard him as the man best suited for our

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37. *Proceedings of the Twenty-third Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States*, August 7-13, 1935, 82. Note this resolution made here in 1935. It will be of interest later on in this history.

38. Sermon quote taken from the January 25, 1937 issue of *The Capital Times* (“Rev. Haentzschel in Farewell, Bids People ‘Live With God.’” *The Capital Times*, January 25, 1937).

39. “Rev. Haentzschel in Farewell, Bids People ‘Live With God.’” *The Capital Times*, January 25, 1937

peculiar needs. But the greatest tribute we can give him is to tell you that he is preaching, in season and out of season, Christ and Him crucified.”<sup>40</sup> Burhop described Haentzschel’s ministry as “fruitful” and “blessed.”<sup>41</sup>

Haentzschel should be remembered and commended, above all, for faithfully preaching law and gospel for 16 years and for establishing a lasting confessional Lutheran campus ministry at UW-Madison. Attempting to begin a student ministry in Madison with an unmotivated or unfaithful pastor would have been detrimental, to say the very least. Thankfully, both the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods can reflect on Calvary and see how that was not the case at all. With a love for the Word and a love for people, Haentzschel was a tremendous blessing to this mission.<sup>42</sup>

Despite the Synod’s financial woes and the matter of Haentzschel’s shared time, Calvary continued to grow during the 1930s and the students continued to shine in their leadership of the Chapel. One of Haentzschel’s final reports to the Wisconsin Synod (in convention) commended these young leaders. “The ‘operating expense’ (of Calvary) is carried by the students. This operating expense includes janitor service, organist service, gas and light, fuel oil for heating, water, lawn expense, organ tuning, oil burner service, etc.”<sup>43</sup> Despite the busyness and burdens occupying their own lives, the college students showed their admiration and appreciation for this

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40. Gerald Jenny, “Student Mission At Madison,” *The Northwestern Lutheran* 9, no. 25 (10 December 1922): 393.

41. William Burhop, “Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Calvary Lutheran University Church,” 5.

42. An interesting note from one of Haentzschel’s Synod Convention reports: In 1935 he made 357 visits over a three month span, 224 of those to students (*Proceedings of the 1935 Convention*, 82). Between being a husband, father of four, a campus pastor, and a University instructor, this is an accomplishment that any Lutheran pastor would love to replicate in his own ministry.

43. *Proceedings of the 1935 Convention*, 82.

ministry in a tangible way. What a tremendous blessing this had to have been for Calvary during some of the the Synodical Conference's (financially) darkest days.

As 1936 came to a close, Pastor William Burhop, president of Concordia College, Fort Wayne, Indiana, accepted the call to serve as campus pastor at Calvary Lutheran. He arrived with his family on February 2, 1937, the week after Haentzschel's farewell.<sup>44</sup> Like Haentzschel, Burhop also came from a college campus and was accustomed to interacting with and ministering to students. Yet again, another apt candidate was found to lead this mission.

Burhop was accustomed to a busy work life during his years at Concordia, and shortly into his stay in Madison, he found that this ministry to students was a rigorous one. He remarked:

Although he had led a busy life before coming to the Madison campus, he found that ministering to the young people here and endeavoring to make Calvary a true spiritual home for them during their stay at the University provided ample work, even though it was of a different nature. Bible study and discussion hours, sermons, adult instruction classes, personal counseling, meetings of various kinds, visiting students in their quarters or in the Infirmary, social functions, preaching or speaking elsewhere—these and many other matters occupied his time.<sup>45</sup>

Readers can see (and any WELS campus ministry pastor can agree) that there is plenty of pastoral work to be done on campus (in fact, during some seasons and stretches of the school year, "plenty" can seem like an understatement). But in recounting his daily and weekly tasks, Burhop also did not neglect to mention the biggest and most blessed task on his plate: endeavoring to make Calvary a true spiritual home for the students during their stay at the University.

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44. A church can't ask for a more seamless transition between pastors than what took place here. Calvary was blessed with faithful students and good attendance (averaging 150/Sunday by 1934). But if this vacancy were prolonged, numbers like these could have tapered off or decreased if there weren't consistent events (at Calvary) and pastoral accountability. Calvary could have lost the good momentum it had going for it. Thankfully that wasn't the case, as the Lord of the church provided the next worker for the harvest in his good will and timing.

45. William Burhop, "Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Calvary Lutheran University Church," 5-6. Burhop wrote this account in the third person.



Burhop recognized early on (and many students who have experienced Calvary/Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel over the years can also attest) that behind all of the services, events, and gatherings, “something bigger” is taking place at this facility. Students, despite any differences in age or academic year, become a tight-knit community of brothers and sisters in Christ with the few on campus who believe what they believe. With these close bonds formed, students want to spend much of their time together, whether it is worshipping, studying, or socializing. They want a place where they can gather to conduct all of this activity. And once they have that place,<sup>46</sup> they want to take care of it, because it’s theirs, because it’s their home away from home. They want to do whatever it takes to grow it and keep it growing because it is so important to them during their first four years away from where they grew up. Burhop seemed to recognize all of this, and in carrying out all of his tasks, he wanted to continue to cultivate that sense of belonging at Calvary.

With this vision and mission mindedness on the part of Pastor Burhop, with a beautiful and spacious worship space of their own, and with a zealous and faithful conglomerate of students continuing to steadily grow, Calvary University Church had many reasons to be optimistic as the 1930s came to a close and a new decade dawned. Calvary successfully navigated their first big “change,” that of the pastorate, and were ready to continue developing this blessed ministry.

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46. Referring to the dedication of Calvary Lutheran University Church, 1926.

## THE 1940s: WEATHERING ONE STORM, BRACING FOR ANOTHER

In a 1940 report to the South Wisconsin District of the Missouri Synod, Burhop recorded that the first few years of his ministry were off to a successful start and that this church's work was "progressing satisfactorily." Sunday services averaged 278. Bible study and discussion periods were held regularly. The students continued to financially bless and support Calvary (in this particular report, Pastor Burhop mentioned that the students had purchased a baptismal font for the mission). Burhop also made 723 pastoral visits.<sup>47</sup>

While Pastor Adolph Haentzschel used his part-time teaching role to immerse himself with students on the UW campus, the student infirmary may have been Burhop's preferred method of doing the same. Also in 1940, Burhop told readers of *The Northwestern Lutheran* the joy, motive and blessing behind ministering to ill and unwell university students:

Your student pastor is interested especially in the infirmary; for there he finds excellent opportunity for service. Regular visits to this hospital for students constitute an important part of his pastoral work. ... Regular visits at the infirmary are important for various reasons. One is the fact that there the pastor not infrequently finds students who have been negligent in their church attendance. In the past some of these seem to have been impressed by the fact that, although they had been negligent of their soul's welfare, their church had nevertheless cared for them when they were ill. More regular church attendance after recovery has frequently been the result. ... At the sick bed the student pastor, like every other minister, makes some of his most cherished experiences.

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47. The content of this paragraph is adapted from *Proceedings of the 18th Convention of the South Wisconsin District of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States*, June 17-21, 1940, 35. The time-frame of the 723 visits is not specified. If annual, that would amount to over 2 visits per day on average. In any case, another model example of pastoral care is given from the Calvary campus pastor.

There he often sees the wonderful power of the divine Word calling sinners to repentance and faith, to trust in the gracious providence of the Lord, and to patience in the hope of eternal salvation.<sup>48</sup>

As these reports demonstrate, Pastor Burhop faithfully carried out his pastoral tasks and Calvary continued to grow. But despite what might appear to be “business as usual,” it was around this time that Calvary Lutheran and the University of Wisconsin (and the whole country, for that matter) would begin to feel the effect of World War II on their standard operations.

President Roosevelt’s Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 (also known as “the draft”) led to several years of smaller enrollment at UW. The fall semester of the 1940-41 school year had an enrollment of 11,376. For the spring semester that number dropped to 10,511, and a year later (spring semester of 1941-42) university enrollment dipped to around 9,200.<sup>49</sup>

Calvary’s ministry was greatly impacted by these decreased enrollments. At the start of the decade, Burhop and Calvary served 655 students. But during the war, that number dropped by almost half, to 340.<sup>50</sup> Of those that still continued to gather at Calvary, considerably fewer males were present at services and functions due to the draft. But even though the war had to be a frustrating disruption to Calvary’s ministry, it also provided new opportunities for outreach. During the war years, Pastor Burhop and Calvary sought out ways to share the gospel with the uniformed students both on and off campus.

On campus, Burhop was proactive in reaching the students who served in the armed forces. One way this was accomplished was through simple advertising. He told the *Lutheran Witness*

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48. William Burhop, “The Madison Student Chapel: Pastoral Service At The Student Infirmary,” *The Northwestern Lutheran* 27, no.18 (8 September 1940): 283-84.

49. Statistics taken from William Burhop, “From Our Student Chapel In Madison,” *The Northwestern Lutheran* 29, no. 7 (5 April 1942): 110.

50. William Burhop, “Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Calvary Lutheran University Church”, 6.

that during the war, “(university pastors of the various denominations) place posters giving the name, address, synodical affiliations, and the Sunday program of their chapels in all of the buildings in which service units are quartered.”<sup>51</sup> This was a good start, but Burhop and some of his fellow campus pastors at UW-Madison soon discovered an even more direct and personal way of getting in touch with these trainees.

Burhop (again to the *Lutheran Witness*) noted:

At Madison, another means of securing the names of our members has been introduced. The local university pastors have induced the ranking military officer to request incoming trainees to sign religious affiliation cards, which are to be turned over to the pastors. These cards provide space for the name of the trainee’s home pastor. When they are released, the university pastors sort them, and each one places the cards of men and women of his denomination, or synod, into his files. The arrangement is an excellent one. It must be said, however, that we have not yet been in a position to enjoy its advantages, for the military office has not been able to clear the cards with promptness. The explanation is that its staff is still too small and too busy. If this difficulty could be overcome, the university pastors would be in a position to secure the names of their respective members almost as soon as they arrive<sup>52</sup>

Despite the efforts made by Burhop and the campus pastors of other denominations to reach the student trainees, sometimes these efforts were thwarted through no fault of their own. Although some of these attempts to connect with these students would fail, these pastors (Burhop included) can still be commended for diligently seeking out these uniformed students, even if it involved more work and time on their part. In other words, they didn’t allow the war conditions to lower their morale or fervor towards gospel ministry and serving students. If anything, the war intensified their desire to carry this out.

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51. William Burhop, “The War, Universities, and the Church,” *Lutheran Witness* 62 no. 10 (11 May 1943): 181. *Lutheran Witness* was the Missouri Synod’s main periodical, much like *The Northwestern Lutheran* or *Forward in Christ* was/is to the Wisconsin Synod. While *The Northwestern Lutheran* was rebranded in 2000, *Lutheran Witness* still exists under that title to this day.

52. Burhop, “The War, Universities, and the Church,” 181.

It would appear that these efforts were not entirely fruitless, as Calvary did see a noteworthy amount of uniformed student trainees at their chapel during the war years. Not only did these students visit Calvary and attend worship, but they got involved as well. They sang in the choir, served as ushers, and participated on Student Council.<sup>53</sup> It is admirable to see that a number of these students still sought out involvement at Calvary amid their other responsibilities as college student and armed forces trainee.

Off campus, deployed students were made aware of Calvary's current events by way of the "Calvary News Letter." Created and distributed by Calvary's Student Council, the News Letter was sent out bi-monthly. It kept the active service members in the loop with Calvary, and it gave them a small taste of home amid the chaos of war surrounding them. This publication, an endeavor undertaken by the students, was much appreciated by their fellow students overseas.<sup>54</sup>

The second half of the decade gave Calvary three causes for rejoicing. First, Calvary, like the whole country, was thankful to God that World War II ended in August 1945. Second, Calvary observed and celebrated its 25th anniversary during the 1945-46 school year. To celebrate, they held some special events. In April of 1946, Victor Bittner, the former president of one of Calvary's first Student Council's, spoke at a banquet.<sup>55</sup> On May 5, 1946, Adolph Haentzschel, Calvary's first campus pastor, preached for one of the two services held that day.<sup>56</sup>

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53. William Burhop, "Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Calvary Lutheran University Church", 6.

54. William Burhop, "Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Calvary Lutheran University Church," 7. Burhop wrote, "It [the News Letter] has proved to be a valuable bond between alumni and 'actives,' as many appreciative replies indicate."

55. Bittner was president of the Student Council during the 1922-23 school year. His experiences and recollections from the early days of establishing this ministry would have made for an engaging presentation.

56. If there was any "bad blood" surrounding Haentzschel's 1937 departure, it appears that it was either completely nonexistent or put aside for this happy occasion.

Twenty five years into Calvary Lutheran University Church, Pastor Burhop was pleased to report that this ministry and the students continued to be a mutual blessing to each other. In addition to frequent opportunities for worship and social gatherings, Calvary also offered students plenty of opportunities to hone and develop their “church servant skills.”

In 1946, Burhop remarked, “Many of the students receive valuable experience in practical church work. They serve as organists, choir director, ushers, collectors, council members, or as members of the many committees necessary for the proper functioning of the Chapel’s program. The Student Council, which...works with the pastor, directs the social activities.”<sup>57</sup> The students took advantage of this bounty of opportunities and worked alongside Pastor Burhop in leading the Chapel. These experiences would equip them well to have a spirit of church leadership when they graduated from the university, moved away, and settled down elsewhere.

Conversely, the impact the students had on maintaining their “home away from home” cannot be overstated. Just like they did in the previous decades, the students of the 1940s made important and necessary financial contributions to sustain Calvary.<sup>58</sup> Over the course of this history, the reader can notice a trend—that the students themselves gave significant gifts to Calvary and shouldered the load of its various operating expenses.

It is important to note that these gifts weren’t just the fruits of one particular ambitious group of students. Rather, this became the culture of Calvary. The students who gathered there

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57. William Burhop, “Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Calvary Lutheran University Church,” 8.

58. Burhop wrote, “The students defray all current expenses. They remunerate the organists, choir director, soloists, and custodians; pay the costs for coal, electricity, water, needed additional equipment, minor repairs and replacements. They also make modest contributions to various synodical, mission, and charitable purposes. Their outstanding gift during this twenty-fifth anniversary year has been \$1000.00 toward the cost of renovating the Chapel and social rooms.” (William Burhop, “Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Calvary Lutheran University Church,” 9).

(during any given year) paid the operating expenses, and then the graduating seniors “passed the torch” to the incoming freshmen. This trend continued year after year. Organizing one fundraising drive during a particular time of need is (comparatively) easy, but creating and sustaining a consistent culture like this one is much more difficult. Yet these faithful students managed to do just that.

The third reason for Calvary’s mid-decade rejoicing lay in the postwar enrollment boom at UW-Madison. Now that the war was over, UW-Madison’s enrollment would surge. As mentioned earlier, the spring semester of 1941-42 had an enrollment of approximately 9,200. By 1947, that enrollment would be 18,700—over double what it was just five years earlier.<sup>59</sup> Calvary would reap the benefits of this. With 340 students under their care at one point during the war, by 1947 Calvary would be serving over 1,000 students. While having an average of 410 in attendance on a Sunday was a great cause for celebration, this also created, as Burhop rightly noted, “a real emergency at our chapel.”<sup>60</sup>

For the first time, Calvary would now have a second pastor assisting with duties. Pastor Eugene Klug, only a few years removed from his seminary graduation (Concordia, St. Louis), worked alongside Pastor Burhop on a part-time basis and helped in serving this massive influx of students.<sup>61</sup> As this decade came to a close, the large attendance numbers were so great a strain on

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59. 1947 UW-Madison enrollment statistic is taken from *Proceedings, Twenty-Ninth Convention, Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States*, August 6-12, 1947, 45. It is also worth mentioning that around this time, UW-Madison began looking into expanding its campus facilities eastward. For a time in the late 1940s, Calvary was in danger of having to relocate their mission in the interest of accommodating new campus buildings. This would have been catastrophic for Calvary, whose facilities were little more than 20 years old. Fortunately, no such relocation (as a result of University expansion) would be required of them.

60. William Burhop, “News From Our Student Chapel In Madison,” *The Northwestern Lutheran* 34, no. 3, (2 February 1947): 39.

61. Klug began in January of 1947 and would remain in this role until 1949.

Calvary's building capacity that Pastor Burhop urged the UW-Madison students who lived in the Madison area to attend Synodical Conference churches elsewhere in town.<sup>62</sup> Such a request should not be interpreted as harshness and uninviting on Burhop's part, but rather a sincere and desperate plea, "We'd love to have you, it's just that our facilities can't do it all."

From the end of the 1940s into the immediate future, Calvary's ministry would be one of both tremendous blessing and frustration: blessing in that this ministry had exploded with interested students, but frustration in the inability of their facility to properly accommodate all of them. As it would turn out, this building capacity issue would prove to be just one of several issues that Calvary would need to deal with in the coming years.

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62. William Burhop, "From Our Student Chapel In Madison," *The Northwestern Lutheran* 36, no. 11, (22 May 1949): 172.



## THE 1950s: DANCING IN THE RAIN—CALVARY’S ZENITH

### **Part 1: The Blessings**

The whole matter of Calvary’s booming attendance and inadequate accommodations would lead to a less-than-ideal environment for conducting ministry. However, this should not detract from all the blessings Calvary enjoyed during this decade. The 1950s were Calvary’s most blessed years (in terms of attendance and popularity). The earliest participants in this mission (Pastor Haentzschel and Calvary’s students from the 1920s) would have been thrilled to see what their once modest Wheeler Music Hall ministry had blossomed to become. One of the causes for such prosperity and blessing during this decade lay in Burhop’s successor, Pastor Ed Wessling.

From 1947 to 1949, Pastor Klug assisted Pastor Burhop in a part-time capacity (20 hours per week). In 1949, Klug accepted a call to serve in Kalispell, Montana. With that, Calvary was back down to one pastor on staff. Fortunately, Burhop would not be without assistance for long. In 1950, Pastor Ed Wessling joined the Calvary staff as an assistant/associate pastor to Burhop. A fresh graduate of the Concordia, St. Louis seminary (1949), Wessling was thrust into quite the bustling setting for his first position in public ministry, and once Burhop asked to be relieved of his duties at Calvary in 1951,<sup>63</sup> Wessling was alone at the helm of this student mission. Running

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63. Pastor Burhop passed away on November 7, 1966 at the age of 82. If he left Calvary in 1952, he would have been in his late sixties at that time. Though little detail is given as to his reason for requesting this release, retirement or fatigue from this intensive ministry seem to be the most logical conclusion.

such a large ministry single-handedly had to be a daunting challenge for this new pastor, but Wessling thrived in this role.

Barb Meyer (nee Eastwood) was a nursing student at UW-Madison during the 1950s. She did not have a Christian upbringing in her youth, but through the influence and invitation of some friends, she started visiting Calvary to check it out. This soon led to her taking Bible instruction classes with Pastor Wessling, and shortly thereafter she desired to be baptized. In a recent conversation, Barb described Pastor Wessling with high marks of praise. “He was super. He was a very good speaker, gave excellent sermons, and delivered them very well. So he drew a lot of people from the campus, I think, who belonged to that kind of church [a Synodical Conference church back home]. It made for an appealing church service. He was very friendly, relatable to the students.”<sup>64</sup> Described by another source as “one of the most popular campus pastors at the University [at the time]” with “dynamic personality and gifted delivery,”<sup>65</sup> Ed Wessling’s endearing qualities and giftedness played a large part in attracting students to Calvary.

This robust popularity attracted more than just a hearty percentage of Lutheran students on campus—it also caught the attention of *TIME Magazine*, a national publication. The October 19, 1953 issue of *TIME* published a brief writeup on Calvary and gave the entire country a glimpse into what an average Sunday at this ministry looked like:

How this [ministry to college students] is done is well demonstrated at Calvary Lutheran Chapel, on the campus of the University of Wisconsin. Last week, as on any typical Sunday, the day began with a 9:30 a.m. service, followed by another service at 11. By 2:30 p.m, the Calvary touch-football team was practicing for a game with the Catholic

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64. Barb Meyer, Interview, October 31, 2019.

65. “WELS Lutheran Campus Ministry 1920-1964 University of Wisconsin - Madison (A historical sketch of WELS Lutheran Campus Ministry in Madison--the pastors and the people they served), drawer 2006 Chapel Facility History & Docs, folder Chapel History, Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel Archives.

student chapel next door. At 5:45, the wood-paneled recreation room in the basement was filled with students who had come for the weekly ‘cost supper’—spaghetti, salad, ice cream, cake and coffee for 40¢. Most of them wore name tags, and each newcomer was called upon to stand and be welcomed with a cheer—‘Hi, Joe! Hi, Mary!’—with crew-cut Pastor Ed Wessling acting as M.C. Next came a movie, one of the Lutheran TV series. This is the Life, which led to a discussion session on faith. Before 8, the group went upstairs into the chapel again for a candlelit vesper service. The evening ended in the lounge with Macintosh apples, talk and ‘schafskopf,’ a relative of rummy. Calvary is sponsored jointly by the Wisconsin Synod and the Missouri Synod Lutherans, but it is run by a student council and popular 29-year-old Pastor Wessling, who wants to specialize in student work. College chapels like Calvary, he feels, can be a healthy new way of reaching young people. The young members of his congregation give a hearty amen to that. ‘Having our own chapel makes us feel much more at home than in a normal congregation,’ said one of them last week. ‘I’m doing a lot more here than I would at home.’<sup>66</sup>

Sundays at Calvary were more than a one hour affair. Between services, social events, and studying, one could spend an entire day there with ease. Just like in past years, the students remained heavily involved throughout the decade. In 1955, they contributed \$14,000 towards Calvary.<sup>67</sup> They assembled a choir of over 50 student singers and conducted multi-state tours. Students put on religious drama plays. There was no shortage of ways to get involved at Calvary.

Mrs. Meyer has fond memories from her time at Calvary during her years as a student. She participated in one of the dramas. Additionally, she would volunteer and bake cookies for the weekly cost suppers at Calvary. But without question her greatest memory of Calvary would be that it was the place where she met the love of her life. John Meyer served Calvary as vicar during the 1956-57 school year. The two began dating while they both were involved with Calvary and got married there in July of 1958.<sup>68</sup>

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66. “Campus Churches.” *TIME*, October 19, 1953.

67. *Reports and Memorials, Thirty-Third Convention Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States*, August 10-17, 1955, 49. According to [usinflationcalculator.com](http://usinflationcalculator.com), this amount of money in 1955 would be the equivalent of students giving over \$130,000 today.

68. It was a joy to speak with Barb Meyer for this work. It would have been good to speak with Pastor Meyer as well. However, he was called home to heaven on May 8, 2019, several months before this writer began his research.

The mid-fifties signaled the beginning of a new trend at Calvary: vicars (pastoral interns). By 1955, Calvary (now at three Sunday services) was averaging over 700 in attendance each Sunday. To help lighten Wessling's workload, a full-time secretary was brought on and pastoral assistance (in vicars) followed shortly thereafter. John Meyer, a Wisconsin Synod seminarian, was Calvary's first vicar, followed by Ronald Halamka (Missouri), Eugene Strangmann (Wisconsin), and Luther Otto (Missouri).<sup>69</sup>

Ed Wessling served Calvary from 1950-1959. In 1959, Walter Wegner, a Wisconsin Synod pastor serving a large congregation in Columbus, Wisconsin, accepted the call to serve Calvary. He would be the only Wisconsin Synod pastor to serve this intersynodical campus ministry.

### **Part 2: The Challenges**

To the outside observer it would seem that Calvary was a booming, bustling, unstoppable ministry during this decade, and in many respects it was. But on the inside, the foundation was starting to crumble. It was crumbling, somewhat literally, in that the building was bursting at the seams. But also, this decade contained the climax of the dissension and division between the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods. Determining how to handle Calvary's building situation while the synods spiraled towards suspended fellowship was Calvary's greatest challenge of the decade.

Aware of the problems with the current facility and the need for change, the Wisconsin Synod resolved at their 1955 convention to support the Calvary Joint Board in expanding the

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69. It is interesting to observe that there was a time in history where Wisconsin Synod seminarians would vicar under a Missouri Synod supervising pastor. But it's even more interesting to see that a Wisconsin Synod seminarian was still assigned to vicar under a Missouri Synod bishop when intersynodical tensions between Wisconsin and Missouri were reaching their climax in the late fifties.

property for Calvary Lutheran Chapel and Student Center.<sup>70</sup> The plan was not to tear down the current Chapel and Student Center (it was only thirty years old, after all) but rather to expand it. This would be accomplished by purchasing available land adjacent to Calvary.

Without doubt, this was the necessary first step to take. The numbers underscored the great necessity of facility expansion. Between 750-1,050 attended three Sunday services in a sanctuary that held, at most, 300-350. The student lounge (designed for 40) was drawing about 100. Sunday cost suppers drew 160 in a space designed for 90 at maximum occupancy. Calvary's choir balcony (designed for 35) housed a choir double the size of its capacity.<sup>71</sup> This level of strain was not sustainable.<sup>72</sup>

Necessity was a major factor in exploring expansion, but pressure also played a significant part. Calvary's success this decade was due, in part, to a growing enrollment at UW-Madison. While Calvary was determining its next steps in the 1950s, the University itself was also exploring land acquisition to expand their own operations. In other words, any available real estate near campus was in high demand and would not stay on the market long. If Calvary was going to expand, they needed to act fast.

Several key events in Calvary's pursuit to expand occurred during the summer months of 1960. The Calvary Joint Mission Board secured a limited option on land adjacent to Calvary for \$150,000, and the option was set to expire in July. The time had come for WELS to make a

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70. *Reports and Memorials of the 1955 Convention*, 51.

71. "News-Notes on Calvary as of October 18, 1958," box 836, folder Calvary Lutheran Chapel, WELS Synod Archives.

72. Richard Balge recalled a memorable snapshot of Calvary's busyness and high demand in the late 1950s. "In 1958 there was a serious seating problem and long lines of worshipers waited outside during the service to be assured of a pew at the next service. Among those who stood in line on one Sunday morning was a very distinguished visitor, UW President E.B. Fred" (Balge, "An Account of WELS Campus Ministry in Madison, Wisconsin," 5).

major decision on the future of this mission. In the interest of necessity and urgency (as previously mentioned), the answer on whether or not to proceed would have been an obvious “yes.” However, with the Synodical Conference trending towards dissolution, that made this decision tremendously more difficult. “What would happen to our synod’s assets in this mission if fellowship is suspended in the near future” had to have been weighing heavy on the minds of the various WELS leaders in charge of planning Calvary’s future. Because of the difficulty of this matter, the synod had delayed action on this matter for several years after the original 1955 resolution to expand Calvary.

Despite opposition from the WELS Board of Trustees, the Western Wisconsin District Mission Board (WWDMB), at its district convention of June 13-16, 1960, endorsed the acquisition of this land option. The WWDMB implored the Board of Trustees to reconsider its previous rejection of funding and to now allow the proper funds to be released for this expansion. Well aware of both Calvary’s optimistic future and the Synodical Conference’s bleak one, the WWDMB felt comfortable, after persuasion by the Calvary Joint Mission Board (represented by both synods), to go through with this project.

Not a month removed from this convention, John Schaadt, a member of the WWDMB, sent a letter to the Board of Trustees on this matter. Though this is just one piece of correspondence, it is extremely important in understanding what was going through the mind of the WWDMB in the verdict it reached a few weeks prior:

Brethren, when we are confronted with a situation in any way unpleasant to us we look at the alternatives. If you are informed that you require surgery costing \$1,000, your first reaction may be that this is exorbitant. Then you learn the alternative, you most likely approve the surgery. I believe we face the same situation at Madison. The Wisconsin Synod was prepared to build when I joined the Mission Board more than four years ago. The Wisconsin Synod has delayed the necessary expansion during all this time. The Missouri Synod members of the Madison Student Mission Board, with power to act, are convinced we need to buy the property. It seems to me that if we refuse to go along with

the purchase of the property the only honorable alternative is to inform the Missouri Synod of this before the option expires so that they may purchase it themselves if they wish to do so. If they do purchase it, and I believe they will, the only honorable thing for us [WELS] to do is to sell our equity in the present property to the Missouri Synod and inform our hundreds of students at the University that they may attend our Wisconsin Synod churches five miles or more from the campus if they wish to do so. I am sure you know what this would mean. It would mean that we would be prepared to permit a large number of our University Students to become members of the Missouri Synod, or some other Synod which is providing services near the campus. I do not say this to pressure you. I sincerely hope my Synod will act honorably. I am convinced that honorable conduct permits only two possibilities: 1. Buy the property, or 2. Get out of Student Work at Madison.<sup>73</sup>

This whole matter was a lose-lose situation. One option involved making a long-term commitment alongside a synod that they (WELS) would likely soon sever fellowship ties with. The other was saving the money, withdrawing from student ministry in Madison and, in doing this, potentially losing dozens (maybe even hundreds) of WELS college students to the Missouri Synod, another church, or no church at all.

So which was the lesser of two evils? The WWDMB would have said the former, because a “surgery costing six figures” (that is, investing in a Calvary renovation) was a small price to pay to keep Calvary’s WELS students still somewhat connected to the WELS. Despite all of the issues going on between the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods, Schaadt contended that maintaining some connection with these students would be far better than none whatsoever. But in either case, this matter needed to be handled in a proper fashion. The delay needed to come to an end. WELS needed to either be all-in on Calvary or all-out on UW-Madison campus ministry. It appears that this appeal was taken to heart. During that summer (1960), the Board of Trustees authorized the \$150,000 expenditure for the land, and Calvary’s Joint Mission Board completed the purchase shortly thereafter.

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73. John Schaadt to WELS Board of Trustees, 5 July 1960, box 836, folder Calvary Lutheran Chapel, WELS Synod Archives.

The writings surrounding the final days of fellowship between the two synods are perplexing, to say the least. WELS resolved at their 1961 synod convention to suspend fellowship with the Missouri Synod. Yet at that same convention, the Calvary project appeared to have been intensifying almost as if “the split” was nonexistent. At this convention, the WWDMB reported that the Calvary Joint Mission Board recommended a \$100,000 increase in the total projection for the Calvary expansion project (from \$350,000 to \$450,000).<sup>74</sup> The WWDMB urged approval of this project. While the intersynodical fellowship was disintegrating, matters pertaining to expanding and improving Calvary were escalating.

In retrospect, it is interesting to see two different sides of WELS in this matter. On the one hand, the synod was fervently looking to suspend fellowship with the Missouri Synod. On the other hand, some inside of the synod (specifically, the WWDMB) were determined to continue investing in Calvary. As alluded to earlier, the decision on Calvary was tremendously difficult with serious consequences accompanying whatever would be settled on.

The WWDMB’s love and concern for the Madison students was evident throughout this entire challenging endeavor. This was especially seen in some of their closing words of the increased budget recommendation at that 1961 convention: “This [the increase of funds] is recommended in full awareness of the cost involved, *in the realization not only of the vital importance of Calvary to our own Lutheran sons and daughters, but also in view of the extraordinary mission opportunities involved in such a campus community as is ours at Calvary.*”<sup>75</sup> For decades, students of both the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods led and heavily

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74. *Proceedings of the Thirty-Sixth Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod*, August 8-17, 1961, 34. It is worth noting once more that the Calvary Joint Mission Board was comprised of representatives from both Synods. The WELS was, in part, driving this recommendation because there was WELS representation on the Calvary Board. It should also be mentioned that these figures account for the total cost of the project, *shared by both synods*. The WELS was not accountable for this full amount.

75. *Proceedings of the 1961 Convention*, 35. Emphasis added.



financed this mission. This ministry would not have enjoyed the success it did for 40 years were it not for the faithfulness and loyalty of all of its students. And now at the crossroads of where to go next, the WWDMB wanted to reciprocate this love and loyalty to the WELS students at Calvary. To do this, they made every effort to keep this “vitaly important” ministry, this “home away from home,” intact for the students who loved it so dearly. In making these recommendations and supporting a Calvary expansion, the WWDMB wanted to keep their involvement in Calvary alive for as long as absolutely possible before other circumstances would force their departure from Calvary, and possibly from Madison altogether.

After what a great blessing the students had been to Calvary and vice versa, who could blame them for having this philosophy?

## 1961-1964: FELLOWSHIP IS SUSPENDED—NOW WHAT?

As mentioned earlier, the August 1961 WELS synod convention featured both an official suspension of fellowship with the Missouri Synod and an ambitious vision to proceed with Calvary's expansion plans. The reality (whether it was immediately realized at the time or not) was that joint efforts could no longer continue between two synods no longer in fellowship. That being said, for WELS to immediately "pull the plug" on Calvary—that wasn't exactly an option either. At the time of "the split," Calvary Lutheran Chapel and Student Center of Madison was unique in that it was the only entity where the WELS held a proprietary interest in partnership with the Missouri Synod.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, coming to terms on who would claim ownership of the building (or if the building would get sold to a third party altogether) was going to take time.<sup>77</sup>

The Western Wisconsin District Mission Board (WWDMB), once determined to maintain a WELS connection at Calvary, soon came to realize that continuing with the expansion project was no longer feasible. Nine months following the suspension of fellowship, its focus had turned from expansion to dissolution. In a 1962 report, the Board wrote, "Efforts are underway to reach a settlement with the architect whose services have been terminated. Beyond this, nothing concrete has been done regarding division of activities and property at Calvary, nor has a

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76. Bouzek, Robert. "Lutheran Church Split Indicated Future Shifts." *Wisconsin State Journal*, Aug 20, 1961.

77. In the memorial where they officially suspended fellowship, the convention also resolved "to continue our support of the joint projects carried on by the Synodical Conference and by groups within the Synodical Conference until we can adjust to the new conditions brought about by the suspension of fellowship with The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod" (*Proceedings of the 1961 Convention*, 199).

satisfactory solution to the complex problem been found. We invite your prayers and counsel.”<sup>78</sup>

After investing considerable time and money into the expansion project, persuading the synod at large to back the project, and now having to divide assets after the “divorce,” the situation with Calvary made the WWDMB’s work quite challenging in the late fifties and early sixties.

With all of the “excitement” surrounding the potential expansion and intersynodical conflict, little has been mentioned about the ministry taking place inside of Calvary during this span of time. What impact, if any, did the (impending) “split” have on the day-to-day operations at the State Street chapel and student center? At this time, we will briefly revisit Pastor Wegner and his work during these tumultuous years.

As stated earlier, Pastor Walter Wegner succeeded Wessling in 1959 after Wessling took a call to Immanuel Lutheran in Valparaiso, Indiana. Wegner had outstanding reports from his former and current parishes.<sup>79</sup> He also participated in school building projects at both of those locations. With an excellent record, experience in leading a large congregation (Zion, Columbus), and participation in two large building projects, Wegner was a fine candidate to lead this roaring campus ministry through a hopeful expansion project.

Calvary continued to enjoy a blessed ministry under Wegner’s leadership. Sunday services averaged 615, Tuesday Matins drew 45 to 50, and Thursday Vespers saw an average of 150 to 175 in attendance.<sup>80</sup> The building was open daily from 8 am to 11 pm for studying and social

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78. *Report To The Nine Districts Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod*, May 1962, 31.

79. St. Paul’s, Moline, Illinois and Zion, Columbus, Wisconsin were two of his former congregations. Both were WELS churches. This paragraph’s information on Wegner is taken from Wegner’s “Nominee for position of pastor at Calvary Lutheran Student Mission,” box 836, folder Calvary Lutheran Chapel, WELS Synod Archives.

80. While certainly not bad numbers by any means, Sunday attendance took a bit of a dip from the 750-1,050 average attendance during the Wessling era. Wegner, in a November 2, 1960 pastoral report mentioned: “Students living in dorms have reported larger than usual numbers of students leaving the campus over weekends. This may to some extent account for the fact that the Sunday church attendance for the first eight weeks [of the 1960-61 school year] has not exceeded 607” (November 2 1960 Calvary Council Report, 2, box 836, folder Calvary

gatherings. A number of clubs and groups, such as Student Council, a choir (of 81 members), Couples Club, graduate students club, and Alumni Association met routinely. Calvary was humming along with plenty of activity at all times.

According to Wegner, Calvary was a place of “little, to no, synodical discrimination.”<sup>81</sup>

Despite the mounting tensions between the WELS and LC-MS, Calvary seemed to be making it through this fray unscathed, for the most part. A 1960 Calvary Council report stated:

The future of Calvary as a result of the possible Synodical split was discussed. The question was brought up about the possibility of having a program concerning Synodical differences. Pastor Wegner said that, although it is the privilege of every Calvaryite to be informed on this situation that it would be difficult to find a completely unbiased person to speak on this subject and that it might cause lines of question or differences to arise here at Calvary where there is little, if no, synodical discrimination.<sup>82</sup>

If tensions and conflict were already minimal to nonexistent between WELS and LC-MS students at Calvary, and if talking about them could lead to issues arising, Wegner would have contended, “Why rock the boat?” Besides, he was absolutely correct in his “unbiased speaker” point. The most appropriate person to teach the students about these intersynodical tensions would have been him, the pastor. This would have been incredibly difficult for him to do. Much like a pastor is encouraged to keep his personal political views under lock and key, this seemed to be a similar situation. With a nearly 50/50 split of Wisconsin and Missouri Synod students attending Calvary,<sup>83</sup> what would have happened if Wegner inadvertently (or intentionally) tipped

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Lutheran Chapel, WELS Synod Archives). As perhaps another cause for the slight decline, this writer wonders if the popular Ed Wessling’s departure led to a couple of “back door losses” at Calvary.

81. November 2 1960 Calvary Council Report, 2, box 836, folder Calvary Lutheran Chapel, WELS Synod Archives.

82. November 2 1960 Calvary Council Report, 2, box 836, folder Calvary Lutheran Chapel, WELS Synod Archives.

83. According to *News-Notes on Calvary as of October 18, 1958*: “Synodical Conference percentage on student enrollment: 55% Mo. Synod, 45% Wisconsin Synod.” (“News-Notes on Calvary as of October 18, 1958,” box 836, folder Calvary Lutheran Chapel, WELS Synod Archives).

his hand and took a side with one synod or another? He very well could have alienated half of his congregation.

The challenge of having to be an unbiased representative of both synods may have accounted for Wegner's short tenure as Calvary's campus pastor. A gifted Hebrew scholar,<sup>84</sup> Wegner had barely unpacked his boxes in Madison before he was extended a call in 1960 to teach Old Testament exegetical theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He turned down this call in light of how brief his stay in Madison had been. However, he was extended this same call a second time in the spring of 1961. This time he requested his release from Calvary stating, "Close ties in both synods would make my work here difficult."<sup>85</sup>

Now that Wegner was gone and now that "the split" had occurred, Calvary had a new dilemma to navigate: how do we (a divided but joint entity) go about finding a new pastor? Two calls were issued by the Calvary Joint Board in an effort to replace Wegner, and both were declined, in part, because the candidates questioned the validity of a call issued jointly by two synods who were not in fellowship with each other.<sup>86</sup> To resolve this, the Calvary Board reached the following resolution:

Whereas the calls extended by the Joint Board of the Calvary Student Chapel have been declined mainly because of the question of the validity of the call, as a temporary solution we, the Wisconsin Synod members of the Joint Board, resolve to hold in

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84. During the 1960-61 school year, Wegner was invited to serve as a teaching assistant in the University's Department of Hebrew Studies. This entailed teaching three 50-minute lectures per week. The Calvary Board granted Wegner permission to do this. (November 1 1960 Calvary Council Report, 2, box 836, folder Calvary Lutheran Chapel, WELS Synod Archives). Though the times of these teaching engagements did not interfere with any other standing Calvary activities, this is interesting for two reasons: 1) He was a part-time teacher on top of preparing for three Sunday services, Tuesday Matins, Thursday Vespers, weekly Bible studies, counseling, etc. This is an incredibly rigorous workload. 2) It is perplexing that he was permitted to do this, considering how Adolph Haentzschel was prohibited from continuing to teach part-time, partially as a matter of principle.

85. Balge, "An Account of WELS Campus Ministry in Madison, Wisconsin," 5.

86. Balge, "An Account of WELS Campus Ministry in Madison, Wisconsin," 5.

abeyance our right to call a man at this time, granting the Missouri Synod the right to call, and pledging ourselves to underwrite their call in every way possible.<sup>87</sup>

The Missouri Synod would now take control of the calling process. In the winter of 1962, a seven month vacancy was resolved when Eugene Rehwinkel (serving the Missouri Synod congregation of St. John's, Watertown, Wisconsin<sup>88</sup> at the time) accepted the call to be Calvary's next campus pastor. But the lack of a consistent pastoral presence and pastoral accountability for the first semester of the 1961-62 school year had already taken its toll. Calvary's numbers took a sharp nosedive between Wegner's and Rehwinkel's pastorates.<sup>89</sup> The campus ministry, which averaged 615 in attendance on Sundays during Wegner's tenure, was now down to 400-450 on Sundays.

The final years of the WELS' involvement at Calvary were disappointing. Inside of Calvary Lutheran Chapel and Student Center, there were considerably fewer students present for worship. On a larger scale, the WELS had to resolve the fate of the building and assets with the Missouri Synod. The Wisconsin Synod made attempts to buy out the Missouri Synod's share of Calvary, but these attempts were unsuccessful as the Missouri Synod rejected their offers. The fact of the matter was that because of budget restraints, Wisconsin (the smaller of the two synods) was going to have a harder time buying out Missouri than the other way around. The latter turned out to be Calvary's fate. On April 22, 1964, the Missouri Synod bought out the

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87. Minutes of the Board of Calvary Lutheran Chapel and Student Center", 2, 5 December 1961 box 836, folder 1959-1961, WELS Synod Archives.

88. Though St. John's was a Missouri Synod church in the early 1960s, it has since changed synodical affiliation and is now a WELS congregation.

89. Consider footnote 44 on page 20. Here is an actual example of what happened when Calvary lacked a consistent pastoral presence. Had this happened in 1937, the result would have been extremely detrimental to the ministry.

Wisconsin Synod for \$246,000 (41% of Calvary's \$600,000 valuation). After 44 years of blessed intersynodical ministry, this was a sad day for the Wisconsin Synod.

Even though this sale was completed in April, it could be said that June 1, 1964 is the day when WELS involvement in Calvary officially came to an end. At 12:01 am, Arthur Eggert, an undergraduate UW-Madison student also serving as Calvary's maintenance chairman, went to Calvary and removed the "WELS" letters from Calvary's signs.<sup>90</sup> Eggert completed this task and returned to his dormitory on that dark summer night. With that, Wisconsin and Missouri Synod joint campus ministry at UW-Madison was now history.

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90. Arthur Eggert, Interview, October 18, 2019. Eggert is a retired UW-Madison professor. For 41 years he worked in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at UW-Madison and its Medical School. Eggert grew up in the Missouri Synod but following "the split" he came over to the WELS. He was heavily involved at Calvary in its final years of joint ministry (with the Wisconsin Synod). He was also instrumental in the early days of establishing Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel. Any further mention of Eggert in this work is taken from that phone interview.

## 1964-1969: THE WISCONSIN SYNOD'S FIRST "LAY SEMINARY" IS REBORN

A couple weeks before Eggert went and removed the WELS insignia adorning Calvary, he was at Calvary when he heard a knock on the front door. This was peculiar, he recalled, because no one knocked at Calvary—it was a student center with many coming and going on a daily basis. Upon answering the door, he found a man in a blue suit and blue hat. The man was Richard Balge. Formerly the pastor of Divine Peace in Milwaukee, Balge accepted a call to come to Madison and start a WELS campus ministry from scratch in the aftermath of the split with the Missouri Synod and the buyout of Calvary.

It would not be an overstatement to say that accepting this call required a bit of a “leap of faith” on Balge’s part. When he was issued the call on April 5, 1964, the WWDMB had not yet obtained a site near campus on which to build a chapel. Additionally, although some negotiations had taken place, a temporary worship space still had yet to be secured. The author of the call letter (writing on behalf of the WWDMB) told Balge that “there is so much to be said about this call that I will not even attempt to do justice to the matter in the letter.”<sup>91</sup> A great deal of hard work and a fair amount of uncertainty would be waiting for Balge in Madison upon his arrival if indeed he chose to accept this call.

This didn’t seem to faze Balge too much, since two weeks later, on April 19, Balge requested his release from Divine Peace. In the letter announcing this news to his congregation, he described this new opportunity as “a wider ministry, the shepherding of future lay leaders of

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91. Call letter from Western Wisconsin District Mission Board to Richard Balge, 5 April 1964, binder Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel 1962-1978, drawer Council Minutes 1962-1992, Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel Archives.



our church, the pastoral care of young people who will be daily confronted with anti-Christian or religiously indifferent philosophies, who will need to learn again and again that Jesus Christ is the Truth and that He is revealed to us in God's inspired Word."<sup>92</sup> Needless to say, Balge was eager and excited to get to work on UW-Madison's campus.

Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel's early days in the mid-1960s looked much like Calvary's humble beginnings from the early 1920s. Before the Chapel could enjoy its own facility tailored to fit its needs, a rented space would have to do. The Women's Club of Madison, located at 240 West Gilman Street, was where Balge, Eggert, and the rest of the early Chapel faithful<sup>93</sup> met at the beginning of the 1964-65 school year. In his "Account of WELS Campus Ministry in Madison, Wisconsin," Balge recalled some of the challenges that accompanied this early arrangement: "There were disadvantages, such as the requirement that the pastor be present whenever the building was open and the necessity to hold Ash Wednesday services on Thursday when a lodge meeting preempted the hall on Wednesday evening. The inscription on the front, 'The Woman's Building,' was more than some young men could tolerate and they went away sorrowing."<sup>94</sup>

In some respects, the Women's Club may have been a less than ideal facility for conducting ministry. It had to be frustrating for the synod's UW-Madison campus ministry involvement to go from a spacious, finished edifice (Calvary) to starting fresh in smaller rented

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92. Letter from Richard Balge to the members of Divine Peace Lutheran Church, Milwaukee Wisconsin, 19 April 1964, binder Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel 1962-1978, drawer Council Minutes 1962-1992, Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel Archives.

93. When asked how many students were involved in these earliest efforts (of beginning the Chapel), Eggert estimated that "there were at least a dozen of us who had some interest and who got involved fairly early [in this new chapel]."

94. Balge, "An Account of WELS Campus Ministry in Madison, Wisconsin", 6.

quarters. More than likely, Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel's size and lack of "glamour" in its early stages made it a bit of a "tough sell" to the students on campus. Despite all of this, the spirits of the students who did gather at the Women's Club were high.<sup>95</sup> Additionally, the ministry itself was off to a very promising start thanks in no small part to these first students who made Chapel their home.

Eggert was one of several students who defected from Calvary to the Chapel after "the split." He explained that the students who came from Calvary had invaluable experience in running a campus ministry because of how heavily involved they were at Calvary. "Calvary was pretty much a student-run organization. They printed all their own materials. They ran all their own committees. There was a very strong student group and they basically ran everything there. All of us who came over, we were used to running the place."<sup>96</sup> Eggert went on to say that these students did the majority of the legwork on campus promoting the Chapel because they knew the campus better than Pastor Balge did.<sup>97</sup> They knew where all of the bulletin boards were on campus (where students could promote their events, clubs, etc.), and it did not take long for the students to fasten their 11" x 14" black and yellow Chapel posters to every bulletin board they could find.

Another way the Chapel patterned their early outreach was by taking pages out of Calvary's playbook. That is, they began to run Sunday cost suppers and a weekly Vespers

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95. Balge, just a few weeks into the school year (and Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel's official ministry) stated: "Morale among the students who are active in our work seems to be running high." (Report to the Western Wisconsin District Mission Board, 2, 6 October 1964, folder Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel, WELS Synod Archives).

96. Arthur Eggert, Interview, October 18, 2019.

97. This should not be interpreted as a criticism toward Pastor Balge. It's a matter of reality that was, is, and will always be true of campus ministry. In almost all cases, students will undoubtedly have more familiarity with the campus than the campus pastor will, simply because they spend so much more time traversing it than the pastor.

service, much like their Missouri Synod counterpart had long done. Eggert noted the Chapel's strategy behind this: "We would have cost suppers at the church. That became our recruitment, we tried to grab people when they were freshmen or when they were transfers to the school and get them interested in coming to the cost suppers or coming to the Vespers service on Wednesday."<sup>98</sup>

Eggert mentioned that there were ulterior motives present as they spread word about the Chapel on campus. They were not merely looking for students to attend Chapel, but rather they were in the process of recruiting "workers" to help spread the mission. He explained: "When we could attract them to come to those services, then we could try to work them into the organization. So we were pretty active in trying to get new people in to work, that was very much different than a normal congregation where the members of the congregation pretty much let the pastor do that. The campus ministry at that time in the '60s, it was pretty much the students going out there, making things happen."<sup>99</sup> Once these students came and experienced the Chapel for themselves, they then became another set of "boots on the ground" to promote the Chapel to their classmates and friends back on campus. It was a "snowball effect."

The Chapel was blessed by these student's labors. At the end of the 1964-65 school year, its first year of operation, the Chapel averaged 80 for Sunday worship, 30 for Thursday Vespers, and 25 at Sunday cost suppers.<sup>100</sup> The students contributed \$1,300 for new chancel furniture. For a time (until insurance concerns brought an end to the operation) a bus was rented, and student volunteers drove around campus to bring students to and from services. The same spirit of

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98. Arthur Eggert, Interview, October 18, 2019.

99. Arthur Eggert, Interview, October 18, 2019

100. Pastor Balge to Henry Paustian of the WWDMB, 2 August 1965, folder Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel, WELS Synod Archives.

leadership and service that Calvary's students embodied during its original 1920s start was clearly evident again, here with Chapel supporters in the mid-sixties.

As referenced earlier, acquiring land and constructing a new chapel and student center was heavy on the minds of the WWDMB from the day they issued the call to Balge. The land on which Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel has claimed residence since its inception was obtained by way of a WELS connection. Richard Heins was a professor in UW-Madison's School of Business and also a member of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in west Madison. Additionally, he was an ambitious real estate mogul. He owned three apartment buildings right next to the Women's Club. He ultimately wanted to buy all of the houses on the block and raze them to build one large housing complex. However, it appears he reached a point of concluding that this ambition was no longer possible for him, as he sold the apartment buildings he owned to the synod.<sup>101</sup> After their razing, the Chapel would have a great lot located just steps from State Street on which to build a house of worship.

The WELS Board of Trustees had reserved \$220,000 for the building of a chapel and student center at 220 West Gilman Street. The first wave of bids from contractors were collected in January of 1966. The results of these bids unfortunately indicated that the Chapel would need to either increase the funds to meet their vision for this facility or pare down the blueprints. The latter was the initial course of action taken. The architectural firm that was chosen, Cooley and Barre of Park Ridge, Illinois, was directed to revise the plans for this project.<sup>102</sup>

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101. Jerry Siegmann, Interview, December 7, 2019. Jerry Siegmann was a student at the Chapel in 1965. He then served a tour in Vietnam with the United States Navy from 1966-1970. In 1970 he returned to Madison as a student (a bit older in age than the typical undergraduate student) and began taking occasional classes with his GI benefits. He remained a Chapel member into the mid-1980's, and he currently resides in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with his wife, Starla. Any further mention of Siegmann in this work is taken from this interview.

102. Balge, "An Account of WELS Campus Ministry in Madison, Wisconsin," 7.

This did not sit well with Chapel's early conglomerate of loyal and supportive students. A handful of them wrote a letter to WELS President Oscar Naumann and strongly asserted that compromising the original plan and full vision of Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel and Student Center would produce a result "grossly inadequate, both from a utilitarian and from an aesthetic point of view."<sup>103</sup> Appealing to the fact that Chapel had doubled in size in the last year and that "the campus ministry of our church is one of its most vital missions [for] it provides spiritual nourishment for our students who are continually exposed to the rationalistic and materialistic philosophies of the modern secular university," these students implored the Synod to expand the budget of this project by \$35,000.<sup>104</sup> Arthur Eggert's (again, a student at the time) name wasn't attached to this particular piece of correspondence, but he explained what the students' mindset was concerning this building project:

The big problem with building the Chapel was that we who had been on campus, we knew what needed to be done. We wanted to get as much space under a roof as possible. That is, we wanted the biggest possible outline of the building with the chapel on one side and whatever we could get on the other (even if it wasn't finished) and then a big basement underneath. Because we knew that eventually we'd get the money and we'd finish it and we'd have enough space.<sup>105</sup>

These students had good input to give because many of them had experienced Calvary's facility and operation firsthand. They knew what would work and what wouldn't. This appeal may have had some sway on synod leadership, for the project budget was expanded to \$242,000.<sup>106</sup> Ground was broken at 220 West Gilman Street on July 10, 1966. A tragic but

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103. Chuck Skeels and Bonnie Roeming, et al., to WELS President Oscar Naumann, 10 February 1965, folder Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel, WELS Synod Archives.

104. Chuck Skeels and Bonnie Roeming, et al., to WELS President Oscar Naumann, 10 February 1965, folder Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel, WELS Synod Archives.

105. Arthur Eggert, Interview, October 18, 2019.

106. Balge, "An Account of WELS Campus Ministry in Madison, Wisconsin," 7. The final amount of the project came in just a few thousand dollars over budget, \$245,000.

noteworthy circumstance surrounding this building project was the sudden death of its architect. Just five days after the groundbreaking ceremony, William Cooley was killed in a car accident. This unfortunate tragedy brought new challenges into the mix for Pastor Balge, the Chapel, and the architecture firm. However, as they say, “the show must go on.” Despite this obstacle, Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel and Student Center was constructed and ready for use a little over a year later. The first service was held at the new Chapel on August 20, 1967. “A Base of Operations For God’s People” was the theme of the first sermon, based on Psalm 84.<sup>107</sup>

The dedication was held on October 1, 1967. WELS President Naumann preached for the special occasion. This new facility was built in an “L” shape, a layout similar to Calvary’s. The large and spacious new sanctuary with its cathedral ceiling could accommodate 250 worshippers. An enormous cross with an iron crown of thorns hung above the altar. The facility was equipped with a library, various offices and several meeting rooms. The spacious basement, with a full-size kitchen, would afford many opportunities for gatherings, meetings and socialization. A built-in housefellow room would allow for one individual to live at Chapel and oversee the premises. This new “base of operations for God’s people” would be a fantastic and suitable headquarters for years to come.

This decade of WELS campus ministry in Madison was a whirlwind, to say the least. At the start of the 1960s, WELS was investing into a long-term future with Calvary. Just seven years later, they had built their own chapel and student center only a couple of blocks away. “A person’s heart plans his way, but the LORD determines his steps” is true indeed.<sup>108</sup> The Lord had

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107. Balge, “An Account of WELS Campus Ministry in Madison, Wisconsin,” 8. This writer recommends Balge’s essay (which can be found on Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary essay file, <https://essays.wls.wels.net/bitstream/handle/123456789/195/BalgeAccount.pdf>) as a good supplement to this work. Balge gives many more specific details and facts, whereas this work gives more of a “birds-eye view” analysis of the Chapel’s history.

108. Prov. 16:9 (CSB).

seen WELS through the disappointing divorce with Calvary and the Missouri Synod to an optimistic, new, and exciting ministry to college students.

He provided Chapel with a faithful pastor (Balge) to proclaim law and gospel in its truth and purity. He blessed the Chapel with faithful and zealous students, eager to carry on the mission and lead by example (just as the students of Calvary had done for decades). He also blessed the synod with the means to construct its own beautiful sanctuary three years sooner than it took to do the same at Calvary.<sup>109</sup> As the decade came to a close, the statistics also were a cause for rejoicing. By the end of 1969, Sunday worship (while school was in session) drew an average of 150 each Sunday. In total, the Chapel served 647 people in that calendar year.<sup>110</sup> Attendance and interest in this mission were both on the rise as the 1970s dawned.

Though it slightly deviates from the flow of this section, no history of Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel would be complete without mentioning the Madison riots of the late sixties and early seventies. Anti-war sentiments led to student protests, riots, and unrest around campus at this time. Necessity dictated that the Chapel have a policy in place on what to do should a protester ever come in and disrupt a service. Fortunately, it never needed to be implemented.<sup>111</sup> Both Pastor Balge and Arthur Eggert related that since the Chapel is located more on the outskirts of campus, the Chapel was, for the most part, spared from the full intensity of these protests. However, there were select occasions where Chapel got to experience some of this “excitement” up close. Balge recalled one occasion where a fierce wave of protesters nearby

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109. Calvary officially began in 1920. Their first Chapel and Student Center wasn't completed until 1926, a six-year gap. WL Chapel began at the start of the 1964-65 school year and the sanctuary was ready to go by the start of the 1967-68 school year.

110. Statistical Report For The Year 1969, binder Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel 1962-1978, drawer Council Minutes 1962-1992, Wisconsin Luther Chapel Archives.

111. Balge, “An Account of WELS Campus Ministry in Madison, Wisconsin,” 9.

forced the Chapel to lock its doors during their gathering that evening.<sup>112</sup> There were times where tear gas could be smelled from inside of the facility during midweek Vespers. Fortunately, that was the extent of the Chapel's intersection with these fierce protests and protesters.

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112. Richard Balge, Interview, September 20, 2019.



## THE 1970s: CHRISTIAN FAITH IN ACTION

Richard Balge faithfully served as Chapel's campus pastor from 1964 until 1971. He played no small part in re-establishing the campus ministry. Witty with a unique sense of humor and charm about him, he had an endearing personality as well. In 1971, he took a call to teach church history and homiletics (preaching) at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon. He would remain in this position for the remainder of his ministerial career.

Wayne Schmidt was serving at Luther High School in Onalaska, Wisconsin when he was called in 1971 to be Chapel's next campus pastor. When he received the call, he was familiar with Madison and even the Chapel, to an extent. In the late sixties, he pursued a doctorate at UW-Madison and spent much time on campus in the summers. He earned his doctorate in educational policy studies from the University in 1968. Also that year, Schmidt, a gifted musician, performed the dedicatory recital on the Chapel's new organ. One Chapel and UW-Madison student from the early 1970s said the following about Schmidt: "It was impossible for him to enter a classroom and not leave without an 'A'."<sup>113</sup> A brilliant and gifted man with experience in ministering to students, Schmidt would be a tremendous blessing to the Chapel.

As just mentioned, Schmidt had a deep love for and interest in music.<sup>114</sup> Jerry Siegmann was heavily involved at Chapel in the 1970s, and in an interview, he recalled something Schmidt did that was well-received by many—he introduced the *Worship Supplement* to worship at the Chapel. Published in 1969 by the Missouri Synod, this resource brought new hymns to Lutheran

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113. Jerry Siegmann, Interview, December 7, 2019.

114. In addition to his doctorate in educational policy studies, Schmidt also had earned a Master's in Music degree in organ in 1973.

worship and provided a refreshing change from the hymns and orders of service from *The Lutheran Hymnal* that had been repeated for years. Siegmann noticed an uptick in Vespers attendance around the time this change was implemented, seeming to suggest that students enjoyed this new dose of variety in the worship services.

Another area of worship that Schmidt got heavily involved in was the choir. Upon beginning his tenure as campus pastor, he took over as choir director. Siegmann heralded the choir as “excellent” under Schmidt’s direction and acknowledged that he was a talented director as well. Additionally, Siegmann recalled select occasions where Schmidt did the entire service – sermon, liturgy *and* organ on Sundays when the organist was unavailable. To echo what was said earlier, Schmidt truly was a “jack of all trades,” a great blessing to this ministry.

During the years of Schmidt’s pastorate students continued to get involved in a variety of ways. Though the Chapel institution of “housefellows” is far larger and far more expansive today than it was in the early days, the origin of the program dates back to around this time. It was a mutually beneficial program for both the student and the Chapel. One student, the “housefellow” (initially, it was always a male student),<sup>115</sup> would be permitted to live and park at the Chapel for free. In exchange, they would oversee the building on a daily basis. This primarily involved opening and closing the building each day, surveying the facility and grounds for any unorderly activity and taking appropriate action, and shoveling in the wintertime.

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115. The information for this section was provided by Rev. Thomas Heyn. (Thomas Heyn, Interview, December 15, 2019). He currently is the administrator for the ELS Board for World Outreach. Pastor Heyn served as one of the first Chapel housefellows, from the fall of 1971 to the spring of 1973. Though today the Chapel takes on eight housefellows per school year (alternating males and females each year), at the time it was just one person. Heyn supposed that the practice of having only males at first was intentional, as having a single woman overseeing the building alone at night could pose a safety concern.

A popular way that students got involved during these years was through the organization “Lutheran Collegians.” Formed in 1965, Lutheran Collegians was a “national”<sup>116</sup> organization which had “chapters” at a number of different public universities in Wisconsin and surrounding states. The UW-Madison chapter of Lutheran Collegians would meet regularly at the Chapel and would occasionally engage in mission trips. Arthur Eggert noted that the WELS program “Travel-Canvass-Witness” (TCW) was a product of Lutheran Collegians.<sup>117</sup> One example of what Lutheran Collegians offered to Chapel students was the opportunity to do mission trips. Teaching Vacation Bible School in Chicago was one such experience that some Chapel students engaged in. Another Lutheran Collegians program, “Gospel Overseas” (GO), offered a similar opportunity, but this time on a more global level. Between Chapel activities like ushering and singing in the choir to the service opportunities Lutheran Collegians afforded, there again was no shortage of ways to share in the ministry at the Chapel.

Like two of his predecessors, Schmidt also taught part-time at the University.<sup>118</sup> His love for academia was evident, and while he was a faithful and devoted campus pastor at the Chapel, it could perhaps be said that teaching and the classroom were his “first true loves.” After the Seminex<sup>119</sup> walkout at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in February of 1974, the Seminary was

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116. Most of the universities that participated in Lutheran Collegians were located in the Midwest.

117. Arthur Eggert, Interview, October 18, 2019.

118. See footnotes 37 and 84. Again, it is a mystery how Wegner and Schmidt “got away” with teaching at the University after principle (in part) forced Haentzschel’s departure from the same role.

119. “Seminex” was the fallout of the conflict that took place inside of the Missouri Synod during the 1970s. When concern arose over what was being taught at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri Synod President Jacob Preus took action and began a thorough investigation of the issue at hand. When Preus and his appointed committees found the seminary to be at fault, bitter conflict ensued between the synod and this seminary. This tension reached a climax on February 19, 1974 when a significant number of students and professors walked out of Concordia, St. Louis to go and begin a new seminary. This walkout made national headlines.

depleted of its professors.<sup>120</sup> Schmidt expressed interest in one of these professorial vacancies (driven, presumably, by his love for teaching and desire to serve in that capacity). His tenure at Chapel came to an end in 1975. He received a call to teach practical theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Like Balge, he too would remain at the seminary level for the remainder of his ministry.

One of the “hats” Jerry Siegmann wore around the Chapel in 1975 was that of janitor. During the six months in 1975 when the Chapel had no campus pastor, Jerry did janitorial work at the Chapel, and he also organized the worship schedule. After Paul Kelm, a mission pastor in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, accepted the call to Chapel, Siegmann took the liberty of writing Kelm a letter of information and welcome, and he signed it “Jerry Siegmann, Janitor.” In an interview with Pastor Kelm, one of the first things he noted about his call to Madison (with a chuckle) was that his letter was signed by the janitor, of all people.<sup>121</sup> If “education” or “music” were the word(s) to describe Wayne Schmidt, “evangelism” would be the one used to describe Kelm. Assigned out of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1970 to be a church planter in New England, Kelm was very familiar with the act of going out and spreading the gospel. This background in missions and evangelism would make him extremely valuable in Madison to equip college students to share their faith on campus. The Western Wisconsin District Mission Board was greatly interested in Kelm for the Chapel vacancy. After Kelm returned a call to the Chapel in 1975, the Mission Board called him again several months later, and that time he accepted.

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120. It is interesting to note that Walter Wegner (the only Wisconsin Synod man to shepherd Calvary) was a part of the “Seminox” group that left campus in the dramatic walkout of February 19, 1974.

121. Paul Kelm, Interview, November 7, 2019. Paul Kelm is a former WELS pastor who currently resides in Jackson, Wisconsin. Outside of WL Chapel, he has served as a church planter in New England, and professor/campus pastor/dean of students at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, among others. Any further mention of Kelm in this work is taken from this interview.

In Balge's history of WELS campus ministry in Madison, he had the following words of praise for Kelm. "The bulletin announcements of his sermon themes during his years at the chapel suggest something of the creative freshness that those who have heard him preach know and appreciate. He placed great emphasis on lay service, especially lay evangelism."<sup>122</sup> According to Kelm, evangelism and equipping ministry were (are) where his passions lay. During his ministry at Chapel, Kelm strove to embed in his students a love for evangelism and confidence in carrying it out. Kelm's means of doing this was not through any special program or methodology, but it was simply carried out by giving them (the students) the "tools from Scripture" through Bible classes, which, by his estimation, were "well attended" during the late 1970s.<sup>123</sup>

Kelm's focus and goal in equipping leaders underscores the importance of campus ministry and its relevance for the student's life during and after college. Through time spent attending worship and Bible studies during college, the student grows in knowledge and faith. The moment they set foot out of the campus church, they have a golden platform on which they can let their lights shine—the secular university campus, perhaps one of the most hostile settings in which a person can witness to others. Experience the students gain from sharing Christ on the campus prepares them well to be active and driven lay leaders at a new church in a new city and new setting long after they receive their diploma.

But "equipping ministry" (which Kelm focused on during his Chapel tenure) benefits not only the faithful student but also the one who doesn't attend church at all. How many students (on any campus, not just UW-Madison) came to know their Savior through the invitation of one

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122. Balge, "An Account of WELS Campus Ministry in Madison, Wisconsin," 10.

123. Paul Kelm, Interview, November 7, 2019.

of their fellow students? Perhaps it started with a simple invitation to a campus ministry meal or campus ministry social gathering and that was the first seed that ultimately led to a confession of faith. Only the LORD knows how many came to faith through these means. But it is important to recognize that campus ministry and well-equipped students does more than benefit the Christian. Campus ministry is also a means by which the lost on campus are sought out, served, and, by God's grace, saved.

By the time Kelm arrived in Madison, the Chapel was up to two services each Sunday. Bible class was offered between services, along with a couple of studies during the week. By the mid-1970s, Chapel was averaging 158 per Sunday during the school year. Weekly Vespers averaged 54.<sup>124</sup> Apart from the students, the Chapel had also developed its own resident congregation of non-students, people who simply enjoyed attending worship in a campus ministry setting and decided to make Chapel their home church. By 1976, there were 79 of these communicant members.<sup>125</sup>

Also during Kelm's tenure, he established six committees: outreach, properties, Christian growth, worship, program and events, and stewardship. These committees not only brought order and organization to the Chapel's ministry, but they also provided a setting where both students and resident members could work together to further the mission. This appeared to be a well-received initiative, as Tom Trapp, Kelm's successor, kept this system in place when he became Chapel's next campus pastor in October 1979.

Like Balge and Schmidt before him, a call to an educational institution would be what pulled Kelm away from Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel. In May 1979, Kelm left the Chapel to serve as

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124. *30th Biennial Convention Western Wisconsin District*, June 7-9, 1976, 30.

125. *30th Biennial Convention*, 30.

professor of theology and history at Wisconsin Lutheran College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Thus ended four years of blessed and faithful ministry on the part of Pastor Paul Kelm.

## THE 1980s: A NEW ERA BEGINS

Richard Balge left the Chapel in 1971 to teach at the seminary level. Wayne Schmidt did likewise in 1975. As the 1970s came to an end, Paul Kelm was headed off to Milwaukee to teach at Wisconsin Lutheran College. One can start to notice a pattern taking place with Chapel's campus pastors. God had gifted these particular men with great ministerial ability and aptitude. This reality was recognized by those outside of Madison as well, as other institutions sought out these particular men to come and serve as professors at their schools.

One can observe that the turnover rate of pastors at Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel was higher than what Calvary's once was when the synods were in joint fellowship. Whereas three pastors served Calvary over the span of forty years, Chapel was about to install its fourth pastor in less than half that span of time.<sup>126</sup> Perhaps there was some concern among those at Chapel that this ministry would become a "stepping stone" for pastors on their way to other positions, particularly, positions as teachers and professors at other institutions.

Tom Trapp, Pastor Paul Kelm's successor was installed as Chapel's fourth campus pastor in October of 1979. He graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1975 and was assigned to serve three congregations scattered between northern Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula. One of the three ministries under Trapp's care was The University Chapel, a ministry in Houghton, Michigan, that served students attending Michigan Tech. Trapp's experience i

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126. Pastors Haentzschel, Burhop, and Wessling served the ministry from 1920-1959 (39 years). Tom Trapp, the fourth Chapel campus pastor was installed in October 1979, shortly after Chapel's 15th birthday.



campus ministry certainly had to have caught the attention of Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel during the call process.

Jerry Siegmann was present for some of Trapp's first moments at the Chapel in Madison. He shared an interesting account. "I caught the very first minutes. Tom and Carol came to the Chapel one bright sunny day, and I let them in, gave them keys. I just mentioned in passing 'welcome' and that 'our last three pastors left us for academic positions...the last three guys became academics.' And Carol [Tom's wife] interjected immediately and said, 'Well that won't happen, Tom's not like that.'"<sup>127</sup>

That comment should not be interpreted as derogatory towards Pastor Trapp in any way. After telling this story about Tom and Carol, Siegmann added his own reflection: "...and that [Carol's remark] was quite true. He was not unintelligent, not unintellectual, but he was very practical."<sup>128</sup> The fact of the matter is that God blesses all of his called servants in different ways. Some are gifted intellectuals, others are captivating preachers. Some have exquisite leadership abilities, and others are gifted listeners and counselors. Whatever the gifts may be, all of these gifts serve as a blessing to Christ's church. Though Trapp's interests and gifts may not have lent themselves to a career in academia, his other, equally important talents would be a great blessing to the Chapel.

In an interesting coincidence, former Chapel Campus Pastor Richard Balge served as one of Trapp's seminary professors shortly after leaving Chapel. He noted that "[Tom] has a special gift for getting people to pull together. He is a motivator, utilizer, organizer, expediter."<sup>129</sup> Duane

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127. Jerry Siegmann, Interview, December 7, 2019.

128. Jerry Siegmann, Interview, December 7, 2019

129. Balge, "An Account of WELS Campus Ministry in Madison, Wisconsin," 11.

Reichel has been a faithful Chapel member since his days as a UW-Madison student in the mid-eighties. Consequently, Pastor Trapp had been Duane’s pastor for most of his life. Reflecting on what “PT”<sup>130</sup> brought to the Chapel, Duane had some kind remarks to share.

I think his best quality, to me, was that he was a tireless supporter of campus ministry and he wasn’t afraid to put himself out there to share the gospel with others as well as coming up with different ways to try and get people involved at Chapel. If it wasn’t for him I probably wouldn’t be as involved in the Chapel as I was at that time. He was a good champion of helping people to get involved with the church and to get out of your comfort zone. For example, we had invitation Saturdays at least once every semester. So that was where we would go to houses or dorms where we knew there were WELS students and we would knock on the door and invite them to come to Chapel. That’s not something I would do on my own, but being part of a group with other Christian college students, and again, being supported or “pushed,” if you will, by Pastor Trapp, that’s why a lot of that happened. Because he was willing to put himself out there to do things in different ways, to get students to want to do things at Chapel.<sup>131</sup>

PT’s methodology served as a good follow-up to that of Pastor Kelm. If Paul Kelm emphasized the equipping of students (through instruction and Bible classes) to go out and share their faith with confidence, PT’s approach put that education into action. “You have the tools, now let’s actually go out and use them.” Though the prospect of door-to-door witnessing and personal invitations can be daunting for even the most rooted Christians, PT led by example. His willingness to “put himself out there” in gospel ministry and be bold in his personal faith and witness showed the students under his care that they too could confidently go and do the same on campus—whether it was for special events like “invitation Saturdays” or just in regular everyday life and conduct at school.

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130. “PT” was Pastor Tom Trapp’s nickname, a moniker by which he was affectionately known during his years at Chapel. Any further use of “PT” in this work is a reference to him.

131. Duane Reichel, Interview, January 3, 2020. Duane Reichel is a geotechnical engineer in Madison. He began attending the Chapel in 1982 (his first year of undergrad) and became an official member in 1988. Duane met his wife, Wendy, at the Chapel and together they have been among Chapel’s most faithful lay servants over the last 30-plus years.

This whole idea of PT's "putting himself out there" could also be seen in how worship was carried out at the Chapel. Like Wayne Schmidt, one of his predecessors, PT brought new components into the worship service in an effort to introduce the congregation and students to new songs, liturgies, texts, and instruments. Those who attended Chapel in the 1980s would be familiar with "yellow binder" worship. On two Sundays a month, worship would be conducted out of the standard hymnal. But on the other two Sundays, Chapel worshiped out of a yellow binder that contained new songs and liturgies not found in the hymnals. Some of these alternate selections were more "contemporary" pieces, which introduced the Chapelites to something new that can be used for worship. A guitarist himself, PT also did not shy away from incorporating instruments like guitar, bongo, and drums into worship on occasion.<sup>132</sup>

The Chapel enjoyed a blessed 1980s under PT's guidance and leadership. In an interview, Pastor Kelm noted that being Chapel's campus pastor (while a great privilege and joy) brought with it a heavy workload. Between writing new messages every Sunday and Wednesday for almost the entire calendar year, Bible classes, counseling, and student events, it was a tremendous amount of work for one person. PT likely also recognized this, for almost immediately after he came to Madison, the Chapel began exploring pastoral assistance for him, preferably in the form of a vicar.

The synod's mission board denied Chapel's vicar request for the 1981-82 school year. However, a number of pastoral assistants would bless the Chapel in the early eighties. Rev. Robert Schumann served in a part-time role from 1981-83. Daniel McMiller, an ELS vicar, served during the 1983-84 school year. Another pastor, Rev. Gary Faleide, also served in a part-time role from 1984 to 1987.

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132. Much of the content of this paragraph is taken from Duane Reichel, Interview, January 3, 2020.

One of the first projects Trapp oversaw during the eighties was a revision of the Chapel constitution. This initiative began as a result of something he noticed in his call letter from the Chapel. His call letter stated:

While the primary responsibility of your [Trapp's] call is to serve a campus ministry, it is hoped that during the new few years we would be able to work together to address ourselves to these (congregational) issues and to make some decisions regarding the Congregation's future, growth, and role here at the Chapel. The ministry here truly is a special ministry, and the *role that an organized, non-transient, but at the same time non-traditional "congregation" might serve with respect to that ministry is yet to be defined.*<sup>133</sup>

It was mentioned earlier that in addition to college students, the Chapel had the privilege of serving a "resident congregation" of members. From former UW-Madison students who remained in Madison post-graduation to other WELS members of Madison, the Chapel contained a good number of local townspeople who called this ministry their church home. As Trapp acknowledged, perhaps the mission of the congregation could have been stated more clearly. Was the campus pastor's focus on the collegiates first, members second? Or, was he to devote his time 50/50 between the campus and "the city?"

Clarity was achieved in 1983 when a Chapel ad hoc "Constitution Committee" completed a revised Constitution, which has remained in place to this day. The committee determined that campus ministry would be the Chapel's first mission and focus. The Constitution states: "This congregation is committed to serving the WELS Campus ministry in Madison. Our central purpose is to serve the spiritual needs of our WELS students who are away from their home congregations and attend local Madison schools."<sup>134</sup> The resident congregation was still absolutely welcome to worship and claim membership at Chapel, but in doing so, they would

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133. "Ad Hoc Constitution Committee", 11 November 1980, binder Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel 1979-1981, drawer Council Minutes 1962-1992, Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel Archives.

134. "Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel Constitution, "<https://wlchapel.org/downloads/pdf/constitution.pdf>."

need to recognize that the campus ministry was the mission, first and foremost, of this congregation. Furthermore, it would be assumed that anyone who chose to reside as a Chapel member would be willing and eager to support this mission in whatever way possible.

Chapel's most significant historical item of note from the 1980s would have to be the establishment of an international ministry. A notable percentage of UW-Madison's enrollment was international students, and a good number of them lived in the same vicinity, a housing complex called "Eagle Heights," located in the north central part of campus.<sup>135</sup> This international ministry, which has developed to become an impressive operation, actually had very humble beginnings.

In 1983, Pastor Trapp was contacted by a woman living at Eagle Heights, requesting somebody to come and reach out to the international students in the form of an international Sunday school. Lacking ample time amid his other responsibilities to wholly devote himself to this, Trapp authorized a sum of money to be given to her so that she could carry this out. Some time later, this woman followed up and requested funds again—this time to begin an international vacation Bible school (IVBS) at Eagle Heights. Again, money was given for this effort, and Trapp described what happened next. "I assumed we'd have 10-15 children [for IVBS] because that's what the [international] Sunday School was. But 40 something children showed so we had to quick hustle up materials and teachers. And then I said, 'Well since we've

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135. It is unclear what the exact numbers were during the 1980s, but later records indicate that UW-Madison has had a consistent and prominent number of international students. Mark Walters noted on page 3 of his work "The Great Commission Being Fulfilled At A 'Great' University: The History And Development of the International Ministry Program At Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel, Madison, WI" (WLS Essay File, 1997) that, in the mid-1990s, UW-Madison's percentage of international student enrollment was "second or third in the nation...with close to 4,000 international students on its campus." Today, the University states that "Over 4,000 international students from more than 130 countries choose to study at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and our university is consistently ranked among the top 15 universities in the United States with the largest number of international students." ("Office of Admissions and Recruitment: International Students," [admissions.wisc.edu/international/](http://admissions.wisc.edu/international/)

got this type of response let's line this up better...so I started getting the best teachers because I knew if you gave the children the best the numbers were going to come back...the numbers went up to 80 and then 120.”<sup>136</sup>

It was essentially from this point onward that the Chapel began funneling time and resources into this ripe mission field. Chapel would annually hold IVBS on the Eagle Heights grounds from 1983 onward. Just a couple of years after its inception, the average number of children attending this annual event hovered around 80-90.<sup>137</sup> International Sunday School, the original program that the woman on the phone inquired about starting, would formally continue as well—although this would only attract a fraction of students compared to what IVBS managed to draw.<sup>138</sup> Carol Trapp, pastor's wife, began teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in the Eagle Heights apartments in 1984. While IVBS and ISS appealed mostly to children, these free classes gave Chapel a means of reaching out to the parents of the international students. These ESL sessions could serve as a bridge for Chapel to share the gospel of Christ with “all nations.”

When asked if the college students ever assisted in service to the international ministry, Carol Trapp responded, “UW college students always taught Sunday school!”<sup>139</sup> In addition to

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136. Walters, “The Great Commission Being Fulfilled At A ‘Great’ University,” 6.

137. Walters, “The Great Commission Being Fulfilled At A ‘Great’ University,” addenda.

138. The 1990s was when IVBS's popularity greatly increased. One cause of this boom will be stated in the next chapter.

139. Carol Trapp, Interview, January 14, 2020. Carol Trapp currently serves as the Administrative Coordinator at Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel. She has been a Chapel member since 1979 (the year when her husband, Tom, accepted the call there) and she has served on the Chapel's staff since December 2003.

all of the other opportunities that Chapel offered, the 1980s introduced a new arm of ministry that gave collegiates golden opportunities to “go and make disciples of all nations.”<sup>140</sup>

Apart from these noteworthy historical tidbits, the Chapel’s ministry in the 1980s was pretty much “business as usual.” Midweek Vespers and cost suppers remained the weekly favorites of the Chapel students. The six committees Paul Kelm implemented allowed students and resident members to work together in this ministry. For example, the “program and events” committee consisted of students who organized and planned retreats and social events for the Chapel student body. Some students were a part of the church council.

Small group Bible studies were also a Chapel staple from the late 1970s into the 1980s. These intimate gatherings allowed students to join together around God’s Word in studies led not by a pastor, but by their peers. Nancy Ninman, another Chapel alum from this time period, reflected fondly on these sessions stating, “Chapel was our first exposure to small group Bible studies that were not led by a pastor. And I think that’s significant because we’re now at a church...I lead women’s Bible studies now, I feel that’s a huge part of who I am at my church, as a women’s Bible study leader, and I feel like all of that started at Chapel. I never had that exposure growing up in a large WELS church.”<sup>141</sup> Coincidentally, Nancy and her husband, Todd, met at Thursday night small group Bible study.

As has been the case with all of the previous decades, the Chapel proved to be a blessing to students during the tumultuous years of college, the students, in turn, continued to be a blessing to this ministry in their continued involvement and service.

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140. Matt 28:19 (NIV).

141. Nancy Ninman, Interview, December 18, 2019. Nancy is a retired registered nurse/nurse practitioner. She was a UW-Madison and Chapel student in the late 1970s. After marrying Todd (another Chapel student), the Ninman’s remained as Chapel members until 1987, when they transferred membership to St. Andrew, Middleton (WELS), located just west of Madison. They have been active members of this church since then.

## THE 1990s: EXPANDING THE MINISTRY IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

As the 1990s began, it seems safe to say that the Chapel was now “hitting its stride” on all fronts. Now a 25-year-old operation, WELS had successfully managed to reestablish a sustainable confessional Lutheran campus ministry in Madison after the fallout with the Calvary joint ministry. One blessing the Chapel started to see by this time was some consistency in its operation. Pastor Trapp had served faithfully for a decade. Weekly constants like Vespers and cost suppers were student favorites. Small group Bible studies offered opportunities to grow in the faith during the week. Occasional special events like retreats, game nights, movie nights, and other social events allowed the students to bond and connect outside of the stress of school. The international ministry was blossoming beautifully as well. Though no church or ministry is truly 100% without any problems or issues, by and large the Chapel had many blessings for which to thank God: a faithful pastor, faithful students, and an ample facility in which to conduct its operations.

But in retrospect, Chapel’s growth at the 30 year mark looked remarkably similar to Calvary’s growth in the 1950s. Recall how Calvary had become so popular that three Sunday services could barely contain everyone. It didn’t get that extreme at Chapel in the 90s, but it was evident that Chapel was growing. It was also evident throughout this decade that time, thought, and resources were given to make Chapel run as smoothly and efficiently as possible. “Expansion” might be the word to best describe Chapel’s activity during the 1990s. As the title of this section suggests, expansion was explored and achieved in several different ways.

The 1990s saw the Chapel’s first true associate pastor to offer full-time assistance to Pastor Trapp. Pastor Tom Schnick began serving as a full-time associate in 1990. Prior to



becoming full time, he had done some limited service at Chapel during the 1988-89 school year. Schnick would serve in this capacity for four years, from 1990-1993. During the 1992-93 school year, Schnick (while serving as an associate pastor at Chapel) also began to serve a Ukraine ministry.<sup>142</sup> As the 1993-94 school year started, Schnick went from a full-time associate pastor back to a part-time role, as the Ukraine ministry began to occupy more of his time. He resigned from Chapel on January 12, 1994.

If the focus on this decade is “expansion,” attention must be given to the “Town Meetings” of January 1994. These “open forum” meetings allowed the congregation to discuss Chapel’s long-term vision and formulate a plan for the years ahead. Two noteworthy staff additions came out of these meetings. Judy Metzger became the Chapel’s first Student Outreach Coordinator and Rev. John Chworowsky became the Chapel’s first full-time Director of International Ministry. We will first examine Judy’s impact on this ministry.

Judy Metzger accepted the call to be Chapel’s first Student Outreach Coordinator in the summer of 1994, and she was installed in August of that year. She had been a familiar face around Chapel before then—since 1990 she had served as the Sunday school superintendent. As superintendent, Judy took action that had a significant positive impact on the international ministry. A history of the Chapel’s international ministry published in 1997 described her efforts and their result:

[Walters:] In 1990, Judy accepted the Chapel’s call to be the Sunday school superintendent. She took a different approach to IVBS follow up that, by God’s grace, would have a tremendous impact on the Sunday school program. Instead of merely mailing the Sunday school invitation cards to the parents and leaving follow-up at that, Judy took her Sunday school outreach a step further. [Judy:] “I knew that you tend to get the greatest response when you call...so what I did was when Pastor Trapp asked me to be superintendent of Sunday school, he gave me the stack of cards of IVBS enrollees. They were wonderful little cards because they had all the information about the parents on them...and I just called all of them. Once I got past the language barrier even those that

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142. This ministry was not directly affiliated with Chapel’s international ministry.

didn't understand English real well knew right away what I was talking about...And their response was always pleasant because the VBS folks had done such a marvelous job. All I had to say was to ask them, 'Would you like more of that?' 'What about VBS on regular Sunday days?' And when I asked them if they were interested and they said tell me more about it. And so that first summer I must have gone to at least 15 or 20 doors." [Walters:] The Lord blessed Judy's efforts and he granted the Chapel phenomenal Sunday school growth. In the next five years the Lord permitted the Sunday school to practically triple in size.<sup>143</sup>

Judy's efforts had a great impact on the international ministry, and the hope was that this same personal touch would produce similar dynamic results among the university students. It appears that it did indeed. Wednesday night Vespers averaged 38 per week in September 1994 (right about the time when Judy accepted her call to Chapel). Eight years later (September 2002), that average would skyrocket up to 100 per week. The weekly "Dollar Dinner" (cost supper) drew 8 per week in December 1994. By December 2002, that number was up to 51.<sup>144</sup>

Duane Reichel shared some kind words on what Judy brought to this ministry:

Judy was a great blessing to the Chapel. She was focused on the student ministry, she wanted to make sure all students felt appreciated and welcome at the Chapel, she was a tireless supporter of the student ministry and making sure students got plugged in, if you will, getting involved with different groups: whether it was a Bible study or life group or retreats, just making sure that people feel welcome at the Chapel and that they get opportunities to meet other Christian students on campus.<sup>145</sup>

In addition to all of this, one other advantage to having Judy on staff was that she had a background in counseling. While all churches have a male on staff capable of counseling (the pastor), few ministries have a female counselor on staff. Chapel's female students especially appreciated having a female available to them, as there are some matters that are more

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143. Walters, "The Great Commission Being Fulfilled At A 'Great' University," 9.

144. "A Brief History of Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel UW-Madison," drawer 2006 Chapel Facility History & Docs, folder Chapel History, Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel Archives.

145. Duane Reichel, Interview, January 3, 2020.

comfortably shared with those of the same gender. Judy would serve the Chapel for over twenty years as the Student Outreach Coordinator. She was a great blessing to the campus ministry.

The second individual who helped to expand Chapel's ministry was Rev. John Chworowsky, Chapel's first full-time Director of International Ministry.<sup>146</sup> Though the plan and desire to obtain a full-time international worker came out of the 1994 Town Meetings, "Pastor C" didn't begin his role until January of 1996. When he received the call to the Chapel, Pastor C was serving Ascension Lutheran Church in Roseville, Michigan. In the past, he served various positions in countries like Indonesia, India, Taiwan, and Laos. He had also served as a foreign mission counselor/supervisor. One could see why an international ministry call might appeal to this man.

Though he was technically the Director, the "head" of this ministry, Chworowsky once emphasized that the international ministry had more of an "interactive leadership." His role was "not as a director who says 'This is the way to do it,' but rather it [was] participatory leadership with everyone having a say and he serving as overseer."<sup>147</sup> When asked what his "call" to Chapel all entailed, his response was simple, yet profound. "It's letting your light shine. We have a gospel light and it ought to be shining. To me that's somewhat the key is I have the light of the gospel and it makes me love people and want to serve them and looking for new opportunities to find others who will serve with me."<sup>148</sup>

Carol Trapp reflected positively on Pastor C's service to the Chapel: "He was very personable and bridged relationships with many people, including college students and

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146. The content of this paragraph and the next paragraph is heavily adapted from Walters, "The Great Commission Being Fulfilled At A 'Great' University," 15.

147. Walters, "The Great Commission Being Fulfilled At A 'Great' University," 15.

148. Walters, "The Great Commission Being Fulfilled At A 'Great' University," 15.

internationals. He started the ESL ministry in the Eagle Heights Community Center [EHCC]. His arrangements with EHCC to use two classrooms Monday-Friday was huge!”<sup>149</sup> It’s also worth noting how old Pastor C was when he accepted this call to Chapel—64. At an age when many are starting to shift their focus towards retirement, Pastor C embraced this new role of ministerial service. For over 10 years, he was a faithful servant in the Chapel’s international ministry.

The third area where the Chapel focused on expansion during the 1990s was its headquarters, its building and grounds. With the growth of the student population around Chapel (thanks in no small part to Judy Metzger’s efforts), the growth and development of the international ministry (growing to such an extent that it warranted its own full-time director), and the ever-increasing enrollment on campus,<sup>150</sup> the Chapel was starting to have facility concerns similar to what Calvary endured in the 1950s. It didn’t quite get to the point of being “a real emergency”<sup>151</sup> like Pastor William Burhop once said of Calvary, but over time the current building was becoming more and more inadequate.

When Judy joined the staff in 1994, the Chapel was so strapped for available space that they had to convert a first-floor coat closet to give her some office space. Busy Sunday mornings meant that the Chapel had to get creative with where to put all of the different fellowship and study opportunities. Carol Trapp remarked: “Part of the reason we needed a bigger ministry space was that, on Sunday mornings, the library, one office, and a room in the house next door were all being used to teach ESL Bible, 3-4 groups. Sunday Bible class used half the Fellowship

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149. Carol Trapp, Interview, January 14, 2020.

150. UW-Madison’s enrollment at the start of the 1967-68 school year (the first school year of the completed Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel) was 33,000 (“Office of the Registrar: Enrollment Reports – Fall 1967-68,” <https://d26qj0sufsy9x2.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2017/09/report-enrollment-1967-1968fall.pdf>). Enrollment in 1995-96 was up to 40,005, a 21% increase. (“Office of the Registrar: Enrolment Reports – Fall 1995-96,” <https://d26qj0sufsy9x2.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2017/09/report-enrollment-1995-1996fall.pdf>).

151. The original quote can be found on page 27.

Hall and Sunday School used the other half, as well as the TV room and an office. The Sunday School kids would walk through the two ESL Bible classes in the library to get to the balcony to practice music.”<sup>152</sup>

Duane Reichel mentioned how the ever-growing international program came to take over more of the building. He said: “They ended up partitioning part of the basement off to create classrooms and so that kinda, I won’t say killed some of our college activities but it put a damper on what we could do in the basement just because half of the room was divided up into classrooms.”<sup>153</sup> The parking situation was also far from optimal. The Chapel had a mere twelve parking stalls to claim as its own. For a time in the 1980s the Chapel had an arrangement where they rented the parking lot of the business next door on Sundays and Wednesdays, but this practice was discontinued when that business’ ownership changed hands. Street parking was always an option, but if the full potential of this ministry was going to be explored and embraced, the parking situation definitely needed to be addressed and improved.

1998 was the year where a possible building expansion project started to gain serious momentum. In February of that year another series of “Town Meetings” took place. At them, the Chapel family came together to discuss goals and ideas for the future of this ministry and how the facility might be expanded or modified to best carry out this vision. In connection with this, Chapel formed the “FAME” (Facility and Ministry Expansion) committee to plan and oversee these hopeful endeavors. Roberts Construction was selected to carry out the renovations.

Already in the late eighties, building expansion was on the minds of Chapel leadership. The key to the expansion lay in the two houses neighboring the Chapel. In May 1989, these

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152. Carol Trapp, Interview, January 14, 2020.

153. Duane Reichel, Interview, January 3, 2020.

houses were purchased with the intent of eventually razing them and using the vacant lots for a Chapel addition and/or a private parking lot.<sup>154</sup> Now in the late nineties, the demolition of these homes appeared to be on the near horizon as building expansion started to transition from dream to reality. With a construction company selected, nearby assets (the homes) available at their disposal, an expansion committee organized, and a motivated congregation of members and students, the Chapel was optimistic that an improved and larger building was going to be theirs in just a few short years.

However, in an eerie coincidence, another sudden death would hang a gray cloud over this expansion project, just like it did when the Chapel was first erected in the mid-sixties. Mike Witt, faithful Chapel member and the original leading visionary of the FAME team, was killed in a plane crash on September 16, 1998 while traveling for work. Like lead architect William Cooley's death in 1966, this too was a tremendous tragedy. However, as was true for the original building project, the same was true again here at the end of the millenium – the project must go on. Following Witt's death, John Zimdars and Duane Reichel, two other active and committed Chapel members, took over leadership of the FAME team. John oversaw the financial aspects of the renovation, while Duane took leadership of the building component.

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154. In the meanwhile (that is, until that day came where they were seriously exploring demolition of these homes and development of the lot), the Chapel rented these homes out to tenants. This revenue stream was a blessing to the Chapel in the 1990s.

## THE 2000s: “MORE THAN ALL WE ASK OR IMAGINE”

If the events of May 24, 2000, and following had gone differently, the 1966 Chapel would probably still be standing today.

By the time the new millennium began, the Chapel had already invested many hours into the expansion project. A conference was held to focus on goals and space needs for this expanding ministry.<sup>155</sup> FAME had met over a dozen times. Once the two houses next door were demolished, the Chapel could proceed with this exciting expansion project. But what if the houses next door couldn't be knocked down? That was the sticking point of the early 2000s, which sent the Chapel renovation and expansion project in an entirely different direction.

On May 24, 2000, the City of Madison rejected the Chapel's proposal to demolish the two homes they owned next door to their worship facility. Duane Reichel described the issue and some of the aftermath:

A neighboring association, called Mansion Hill, they were vocal about people knocking down houses and just building buildings for the purpose of enlarging whatever facility they wanted. So we got the neighborhood involved. We had several meetings with the neighborhoods, we had lots of meetings with 2-3 individuals from the Mansion Hill association, and it just got to the point where we knew that the Chapel was going to more than butt heads, if you will, with the Mansion Hill because they weren't going to let us knock down the two houses. So then we just, internally, rethought things, and the architect said, “Well, what about just building a whole new building? And it was like “Oh, I guess we never really thought about that before!”<sup>156</sup>

Tearing down houses “just to put a parking lot in their place” was frowned upon by the city and some of its associations. There were many voices around town that advocated for the preservation of Madison's present buildings, structures, and homes. An ugly battle would have

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155. The conference “Future Search” was held on November 13-15, 1998. Attended by over 80, this event explored future ministry opportunities that could one day take place at Chapel.

156. Duane Reichel, Interview, January 3, 2020.

ensued between Chapel, the City of Madison, and their closest neighbors if Chapel fought to proceed with a razing and expansion plan anyway. After the rejection from the city and feedback from neighbors, a reality was coming to light—if the Chapel wanted to change its current facility, it had to be done solely within the confines of 220 West Gilman Street.

From the start of 2001 onward, the Chapel started turning its attention from expansion to demolition and rebuilding. FAME meetings conducted in early 2001 reflected this change of plan. In the summer of 2001, a design plan was submitted to and approved by the Madison City Council. Fundraising was a key focus in 2002 and 2003. The theme of Chapel’s fundraising during these years was “A Mission With A Mission.” WELS donated \$1 million towards this building project. The early 2000s were busy years at Chapel. Not only was the “regularly scheduled programming” of campus ministry continuing to chug along, but now it was ferociously progressing with a building project as well.

Not to be lost in this whirlwind of a decade is mention of an important staff addition in 2002. Chapel continued its expansion of the international program by adding an International Outreach Coordinator in September 2002. Cari Larsen was called to serve in this capacity. With the positive results that Judy Metzger had as Student Outreach Coordinator, the hope was that an International Outreach Coordinator could do the same with the international ministry. Cari’s impact was felt immediately. In 2002-03, cultural ESL averaged 63 per week, and Bible ESL averaged 12 per week. Just one year later, the averages would double to 125 and 23 per week, respectively.<sup>157</sup> Cari would faithfully serve in this capacity and be a blessing to the Chapel until her retirement in 2015.

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157. “A Brief History of Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel UW-Madison,” drawer 2006 Chapel Facility History & Docs, folder Chapel History, Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel Archives.



Ground was broken for the new chapel and student center on October 17, 2004. On that sunny fall afternoon, Pastor Trapp gave a message based on select verses from 1 Chronicles 29, reminding the Chapel faithful that “all that we have comes from God.” The Lord had richly blessed Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel throughout its history, but his providence was especially seen throughout this endeavor. By God’s grace, once the demolition and construction began, the Chapel encountered very few “snags” or disruptions to the building project.

Two additional blessings were bestowed on the Chapel at this time. First, the Chapel needed a temporary worship space for over a year while the building was under construction. The Chapel managed to find the most perfect arrangement during the construction years (late 2004 through early 2006). In 2004, the ownership of 240 West Gilman Street (next door to Chapel) changed hands, and the Chapel negotiated a rental agreement for the first floor of this facility and its parking lot.<sup>158</sup> Worship services and all other Chapel gatherings were held here for well over a year. While it obviously lacked the glamour of its former and future headquarters, it was a tremendous blessing to continue the campus ministry at virtually the same location as it always had. If Chapel needed to move a considerable distance from “the heart of campus” (albeit temporarily), student involvement and attendance could have significantly declined. The Lord prevented this from happening.

Second, the Chapel was blessed to have numerous volunteers involved throughout this entire process. Included among these devoted volunteers were a number of college students. Duane Reichel fondly recalled student involvement during this whole process. “We specifically asked students to get involved with various committees, and it worked out really well because

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158. Though it was no longer the same tenant as it was in the 1960s (The Woman’s Club of Madison), this was the exact same site (240 West Gilman Street) that the Chapel first worshipped at before its original sanctuary was built (1964-1967)

some guys were interested in technology, audio/visual, things like that. Several students were involved in helping us design that aspect of the building. Other students were more interested in interior design. I think they got a kick out of it too because they realized this was a pretty neat opportunity for them to get involved.”<sup>159</sup>

Not only did students get to have a direct say in how their “home away from home” would look, but this was yet another aspect of lay leadership that some students got to experience while in college. When their future churches and schools engaged in building or expansion projects, they could already claim experience in contributing to such a project. This was yet another unique experience Chapel collegiates engaged in, and the system was mutually beneficial.

Eight years after the idea of a building expansion first sprouted, this beautiful new edifice was ready for use. Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel and Student Center was dedicated on February 26, 2006.<sup>160</sup> Friends, members, and students of this campus ministry gathered for worship on this sunny winter day and meditated on the words of 1 Chronicles 29, the same verses that were pondered on groundbreaking day two years earlier. WELS President Karl Gurgel delivered the dedicatory sermon. Richard Balge, Chapel’s first campus pastor, offered a special prayer for the occasion. This was a very happy and special day for this ministry. The new building would be a great blessing for the Chapel as they carried out their mission in Madison: “To know Jesus Christ and to make him known on campus.”<sup>161</sup>

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159. Duane Reichel, Interview, January 3, 2020.

160. A friend of the Chapel (or a supporter of WELS campus ministry) may feel moved to remember campus ministry and/or the Chapel in their prayers on the 26th of every month. In an interesting coincidence, the following all took place on this date: Calvary held its very first service (September, 1920), Calvary held a dedication for its new sanctuary and student center (September, 1926), Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel and Student Center was dedicated (February, 2006).

161. Crafted in 2003, this has become Chapel’s mission statement to this day.

At 26,000 square feet, this new chapel and student center was over three times the square footage of the 1966 chapel. The parking issue was resolved with 37 underground parking stalls. The first level of the new chapel featured a “student center,” a spacious room filled with tables and chairs for study, along with private rooms that could be used for studying or meeting. Additionally, staff offices, a library, laundry room, TV room, and welcome desk occupied the first level. Upstairs contained the beautiful sanctuary, a lounge area, an outdoor patio, fellowship hall, and kitchen. Also upstairs was a “housefellow wing” of four dorm rooms with a private kitchen, allowing for eight housefellows to live and serve at Chapel each year.

Duane noted that the design of having the sanctuary on the second floor was deliberate. Normally, a church or ministry would probably want their worship space as one of the first things that people see when they walk in. But the hope in doing this was to make the building more welcoming to any non-Christian students. The Chapel hoped that their spacious new student (study) center would be used by all kinds of students—whether believer or unbeliever. The logic was that a massive first floor “in your face right when you walk in” worship center might turn off the students who were staunchly opposed to or disinterested in Christianity. The mentality was this: If they could at least get these students in their doors by offering them a quiet place to study and give them a positive impression, perhaps they would also want to engage in the “upstairs” part of the ministry sometime in the future.

This new building featured some unique design elements. The “use of threes”<sup>162</sup> around the building, the “Wartburg Castle-esque” exterior, and repurposing the sanctuary windows from

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162. “Throughout the building you can see the use of 3’s, from the Grand Stair railing, to the exterior and interior windows and doors, the number of window openings, lighting fixtures (the wall sconces in here and the main hallways, plus the chandeliers in the sanctuary), the sanctuary altar area furnishings (the altar includes the use of 3 with hammered copper to mimic the steeple roof which is not real copper), and the reredos wall behind the altar.” (Sunday Presentation – Timeline by Duane Reichel 2-28-16, 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Dedication of 2006 Chapel, folder History of Chapel, Tom Trapp Home Computer Files).

the 1966 chapel in the fellowship hall were some of the most obvious enhancements. Perhaps the most unique contribution to the new Chapel was the stained-glass windows commissioned for the sanctuary.

Designed by E.J. Potente Studios out of Kenosha, the main stained-glass windows in the worship sanctuary feature Jesus on a hillside, speaking with characters adorned in first century garb. But interspersed throughout are more characters, and these are wearing red sweaters, hats, and backpacks featuring Wisconsin Badgers logos and insignia. In a 2016 celebration, Duane Reichel explained in detail what this creative scene was meant to convey.

Jesus is the central focal point of the windows, with generations of people gathered to hear His word... The window has a “Sermon on the Mount” atmosphere, and as he speaks, his words are Spirit-filled (flame in middle of window) to call us, convert us, direct us, admonish us, comfort us, forgive us, gather us, enlighten us, and purify us. Jesus is central to our lives and loves all the people of the world: people of all ages, color ethnicity, and even Badgers. Jesus wants “all saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.” For he is the truth and the way and the life.”<sup>163</sup>

Few stained-glass window arrangements in all of WELS match the uniqueness of the one found at Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel of Madison.

By the end of the decade, Chapel had countless reasons for which to praise God. Chief among them, it would seem, was this new building. Back in 2000, who would have thought that an expansion project to add more parking and ministry space would ultimately lead to a 26,000 square foot, state-of-the-art facility? But as great and awesome as this new facility was, there was something even greater than this structure of brick and stone—the activity and service that took place inside of it.

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163. Sunday Presentation Timeline by Duane Reichel 2-28-16, 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Dedication of 2006 Chapel, folder History of Chapel, Tom Trapp Home Computer Files.

Pastor Trapp's reports from the 2009-10 school year explain just how great the Lord had blessed this ministry throughout the last ten years. Worship attendance was up 58% from the 2004-05 school year. Wednesday Vespers averaged 112 each week. The worship team featured 90 different participants (students and members) contributing their talents to enhance the services. IVBS hit a record attendance of 90. Chapel membership was up 54% since 2004. Over 50 students from the neighborhood came and made daily use of the student center. Over 150 people were digging into God's Word during the week, between large and small group studies. Over 100 students were involved in some form of ministry each week. Chapel sent 29 students on a number of Travel-Canvass-Witness evangelism trips. Ninety years after its inception, the first WELS campus ministry was going strong as ever.<sup>164</sup>

Some of the statistics above were taken from one of PT's files aptly titled "Top Ten Blessings for Pastor Trapp from February 2006-February 2009." As the title suggests, PT composed a list of his "top ten" blessings he experienced in recent years as Chapel's campus pastor. Some of his ten are mentioned above. PT's #1 blessing (according to this document) serves as a great summary for the decade: "Our new ministry confirmed Ephesians 3, that God is "able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine."<sup>165</sup>

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164. These statistics are derived from two documents: "Ministry Update: November 2009" and "Top Ten Blessings for Pastor Trapp from February 2006-February 2009," folder PT files for Chris, Tom Trapp Home Computer Files.

165. "Top Ten Blessings for Pastor Trapp from February 2006-February 2009," folder PT files for Chris, Tom Trapp Home Computer Files.

## THE 2010s: THE END OF AN ERA, BUT THE WORK GOES ON IN GRACE

Now that the Chapel's building project was complete, the 2010s were a bit calmer than the decade before. Though no ministry is without occasional hardships and challenges to overcome, the Chapel's mission was continuing to hum along beautifully at this point in its history. Though this decade was "business as usual" in many respects, several interesting and important items of historical note took place during these years.

One matter that was addressed promptly in this decade was pastoral assistance for Pastor Trapp. PT had just celebrated his 30th year at the helm of the Chapel, making him by far the longest tenured pastor of this WELS mission.<sup>166</sup> With an ever-growing congregation of students and members to serve and with PT at 60 years of age, seeking pastoral help was a wise decision. Thankfully, the Lord had blessed the Chapel with the means to employ a second campus pastor. In 2012, Pastor Bill Limmer accepted the call to Chapel, making him the sixth man to serve as a full-time campus pastor at this ministry.

Limmer had vast experience in ministering to collegiates. For a time, he had conducted campus ministry at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. When he received the call to the Chapel, he was in his fifth year of serving "The Point of Grace," a campus ministry that served college students at various Milwaukee area colleges. When asked what factors might have played into taking the call to Madison, Limmer acknowledged that the prospect of reaching out to the 40,000 plus students in the Madison area was "exciting." In his own words, he also noted that "God has placed on my heart a passion for college age students."<sup>167</sup>

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166. The second longest tenured pastor of this mission would be Adolph Haentzschel (16 years of service to Calvary, the joint mission).

167. Bill Limmer, Interview, January 21, 2020.

Pastor Bill's gentleness, friendliness, and love for Chapel's unique ministry made him a welcome addition to the Chapel staff and a good complement to Pastor Trapp. Limmer made many memories during his time at Chapel. He noted: "I enjoyed 'doing life' with the students, whether that was counseling, hanging out on the terrace or at a restaurant, or chilling in my office or someplace else. Vespers was crazy good—worshiping with 100 college students. I started taking Thursday's off because I could not get to sleep on Wednesday nights."<sup>168</sup> During his time at Chapel, the "Next Steps" group was created. This committee of ten to twelve, made up of a combination of students and members, meets bi-weekly to discuss ideas on how to further Chapel's mission and how to cultivate a tight-knit Chapel community through special programs and events.

Less than ten years after one enormous celebration, another took place on October 17-19, 2014 when Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel celebrated its 50-year anniversary. Many hours were poured into this event by the pastors, members, and students to celebrate the "10,000 reasons" for which to give God thanks for the goodness he continued to shower upon this ministry. This weekend was packed with plenty of activity. A "homecoming" of sorts took place on Friday and Saturday. Students led tours of the building. A praise concert took place on Saturday evening. Pew fragments from the 1966 chapel were given away as mementos. Former Campus Pastor Paul Kelm gave the Sunday sermon, reflecting on how Chapel had 10,000 reasons to praise God. Even Bucky Badger made an appearance. It was yet another joyful day in Chapel's history.

The anniversary committee hoped to accomplish several goals throughout this weekend of celebration. Some of the desired outcomes of the weekend were to bring Chapel alumni together, thank them for their continued support, highlight the ministry currently being done at

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168. Bill Limmer, Interview, January 21, 2020.

Chapel, gather feedback on how to improve, allow students to “network” with other members (in their same field of study or line of work) and inform them on the international ministry, to name a few. One other desired outcome was to “let attendees see the tremendous amount of technology Chapel is using to get across the gospel of Jesus.”<sup>169</sup> From subscription cards to newsletters to posters and more, Calvary and Chapel used many mediums to promote their ministry over the years. A highlight of this decade is Chapel’s great use of technology, used for the purpose of spreading the life-saving message of Jesus on campus.

Chapel started video streaming its services in the 2010s. Dozens utilize this service each week, and it is greatly appreciated. In the back corner of the sanctuary (where the video equipment is located), an email of praise is taped to the wall to remind the volunteers who run the streams of how impactful this video ministry is:

I just wanted to let you know how much I enjoy your service but to stream it live is really great. My daughter attends church there and when I found out about the streaming my wife and I watched the service from our home in Delaware. It was the next best thing to going to church with our daughter (she sat in front of the camera; it was a great Father’s Day present for me. Thanks for the streaming service!

Videos of the sermons are archived on Chapel’s website for future viewing, and sermon audio recordings can be accessed on Chapel’s podcast, “Get the Word.” Chapel has a crisp, clean website with many features and it has an active presence on social media. During the school year, a rotation of students volunteer to write brief email devotions. These are sent out daily. In 2018, Pastor Jon Bilitz began distributing a Friday video devotion on the Chapel’s Facebook page. It is encouraging to see how Chapel has used the tool of technology aggressively and effectively.

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169. “Chapel 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Team Meeting: Monday September 29, 2014,” folder PT files for Chris, Tom Trapp Home Computer Files.



Mention of Pastor Jon Bilitz serves as a good transition into the pastoral changes that took place at Chapel between 2016 and 2017. Pastor Bill, after four years of good service to the Chapel, left in 2016 to continue his ministry at Victory of the Lamb in Franklin, Wisconsin. Pastor Trapp retired as Chapel's campus pastor and preached his final sermon on June 25, 2017.

Recall that Carol Trapp once made a comment in passing concerning the prospect of her husband one day leaving the Chapel to pursue a career in academia, "That won't be Tom." Her assertion came true, he never did that. What's even more interesting is that, from his 1979 installation onward, PT would never serve another congregation. He spent nearly his entire ministry at one parish, a rarity for WELS pastors. He dearly loved Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel, and he embraced the mission "To know Christ and make him known on campus" in everything he did. In the final weeks and months of his ministry, PT shared many stories and expressed much gratitude for the blessings this ministry gave to him and his family over the past 37 years. Not even retirement would be able to slow him down. Following his many years as campus pastor, he remained an active volunteer in Chapel's international ministry and was a routine attendee of Madison area pastors' conferences.

Jon Bilitz was installed as Chapel's seventh campus pastor on June 18, 2017. Like a number of his predecessors, Bilitz was no stranger to working among Lutheran youths. He spent the better part of twenty years as a teacher and coach at Luther High School in Onalaska, Wisconsin. For a time, he also served the campus ministry of UW-LaCrosse. One could imagine that "filling the shoes" of Trapp (a pastor who had such a tremendous impact on the Chapel) would be a daunting task. But it is safe to say that the Chapel remains in good hands today amid the pastoral transitions that took place over the last two years.

“PB,” like Trapp, fully embraces the Chapel’s mission of “knowing Christ and making him known on campus.” He admires and enjoys Chapel’s creative worship style. He has continued to carry on Chapel’s tradition of interesting and topical sermon series. Many have enjoyed the edifying and creative messages PB has delivered thus far into his new call. Approachable and humorous, with a strong work ethic, PB has many fantastic pastoral qualities which will continue to bless the Chapel for years to come.

Similar to when Trapp joined the Chapel, pastoral assistance was explored quite promptly upon Bilitz’s arrival. In May 2018, Chapel was assigned a vicar out of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, its first pastoral intern in almost four decades. Chris Royce served as vicar during the 2018-19 school year. Obtaining the services of a vicar requires a considerable amount of fundraising and planning on the part of a congregation. Even after all of that, receiving a vicar is not guaranteed. What makes this most recent effort noteworthy is that Chapel was granted a vicar “on its first try.” Those at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary who assign vicars appeared to note (and rightly so) that a campus ministry was a beneficial vicar arrangement for both the aspiring pastor and local congregation. It is the prayer of those at Chapel that the vicar program can become a routine occurrence.

The events and immediate aftermath of March 10, 2019, will not soon be forgotten by those at Chapel. On this day, Chapel lost Pastor Trapp, its faithful shepherd of nearly forty years, in a most abrupt and unexpected manner. During the 11:00 service, PT participated in worship at Chapel for the first time since his 2017 retirement. At the start of the service, PT baptized a mother and her son from Bogota, Columbia. It was a joyful occasion. However, after the baptism ended, PT left the worship sanctuary, feeling unwell. Not fifteen minutes after the conclusion of

the baptism, PT suffered bleeding of the brain and lost consciousness. He would never regain consciousness, and 48 hours later on Tuesday, March 12, PT went to be with Christ.

Understandably, this came as a shock to everybody at Chapel. He seemed well and of good health at one moment and then that all changed so suddenly. Despite all of this, the Chapel found great comfort during this time in the words of Psalm 31:15: “My times are in your hands.” Even though his death came about so quickly, God had PT in his control and care all the way down to his final moments. In an amazing string of events, God willed that PT’s final conscious minutes be spent in service to the kingdom, to welcome two more into the fold of believers through the waters of holy baptism. Over 500 attended his funeral on March 30, 2019. Without question, PT had a profound impact on many throughout his time on earth.

As we have seen throughout the course of this institution’s history, when one person’s time at Chapel comes to an end, somebody new arrives and faithfully carries on the work of those who came before them. This has been clearly seen in all of the pastors, staff, members, and students who have blessed this mission. The current staff of Chapel consists of individuals who are passionate about campus ministry and who let the light of Christ shine in all they do.

Alongside Pastor Bilitz, Carol Trapp serves as Administrative Coordinator and plays a significant role in Chapel’s international ministry. Matt Zuhlke is the backbone of Chapel’s crisp digital resources and much-adored video ministry. Worship Coordinator Rich Freese’s extensive background in music is a blessing to the diverse worship services Chapel offers. Rachel Heyn’s gifts of approachability, kindness, creativity, and ambition make her an effective Student Outreach Coordinator. Office assistants Betty Jegerlehner and Beth DePrey oversee many different aspects of Chapel’s building and operation, and they too are vital contributors to the staff.

Together these seven individuals work together with the students and members to spread Christ on campus and foster community at Chapel. Since this staff is so cohesive and effective together, it is the hope that this particular arrangement of individuals would serve together for many years to come. But when Chapel inevitably experiences staff turnover in the future, it can be confident that the work will still go on in God's grace, just as it has for the past one hundred years.

Much has changed over the century of this mission's history. It changed from a joint effort with the Missouri Synod to a WELS-only operation. The site of this location hopped from one side of State Street to another. Thousands of students were blessed by what Chapel offered to them during their college years, and simultaneously, they were a blessing to it. Dozens of staff members kept this ministry running effectively. One dozen men shepherded the ever-changing flocks of students and members as full-time pastors. Many different means and mediums have been used to spread the word on campus (both the word about Calvary/Chapel and the capital "W" Word, the message of salvation).

But throughout the highs and lows of these years, two things haven't changed. First, all of these individuals were committed to the same cause: the crucified and risen Jesus. The work they did was for the same cause: the crucified and risen Jesus. Second, that same Jesus kept his provision and blessing upon this mission the entire time. For as long as he will permit Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel to carry on its work among the Badgers, may both of these always remain.

CONCLUSION: “PASTOR, WHY IS IT THAT HERE AT CALVARY WE STUDENTS OFTEN FEEL CLOSER TO OUR CHURCH THAN WE DID BACK HOME?”

If you walk to the top of the stairs at Chapel and turn right, you will instantly see a beautiful array of stained-glass windows. They were in the sanctuary at the “old Chapel,” and now they line the main wall of the “new Chapel’s” fellowship hall. The window on the farthest right is a Lutheran window. It features a scene of Martin Luther and the 95 Theses. This window was the brainchild of Arthur Eggert back when the 1966 chapel was being designed. A student at the time, Eggert insisted that a “distinctly Lutheran” window be included in this arrangement of stained-glass windows. His rationale was as follows: If, God forbid, that church (the 1966 Chapel) would ever need to change hands and be sold, the Lutheran window would limit who the building could be sold to (i.e., it couldn’t be sold to a Catholic or Methodist church).<sup>170</sup>

Maybe I’m reading too much into this, but as I think about that window and look at it now (after completing this history), I feel moved. I trace that window back to a summer day in the mid-1960s when Arthur Eggert hears a knock on the door of Calvary, goes to answer it, and the man on the other side is Pastor Richard Balge, ready to (re)start a WELS campus ministry on the UW-Madison campus. As the two men introduce themselves in Calvary’s doorway, uncertainty is abounding.

Eggert, an undergraduate student, is on the precipice of changing synodical allegiance (from Missouri to Wisconsin) in the aftermath of the “split.” Balge was excited to be there, but much uncertainty accompanied his call. Both of them had to be wondering, “What now? Where do we start? Where are we going to set up shop? Can a new confessional Lutheran campus

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170. Arthur Eggert, Interview, October 18, 2019.

ministry establish itself and survive on this campus?” When I look at that window now, I think of that very first exchange between Eggert (the proponent of this particular window) and Balge.

I think it’s safe to say that God answered all those questions. God not only kept Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel afloat as it started from scratch, but also God caused this ministry to grow so large that a day came where old windows from its former “we’re running out of space” chapel would stylistically complement its new headquarters.

The goal of this work was twofold. First, it was my goal to celebrate WELS campus ministry conducted at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and show (in a detailed, yet somewhat concise manner) how UW-Madison campus ministry got to where it is today. Second, on this milestone anniversary, I wanted to show that something special happens when WELS students have a home away from home—and this has profound implications on both the faith of the collegian and the future of our church. I pray that both of these were accomplished. For some final thoughts, I want to draw attention to the second of these two goals: the importance of our campus ministries.

This story of UW-Madison WELS campus ministry is dripping with stories of students getting involved. They served in so many different ways. They created and distributed subscription cards to raise funds for a worship and student center. They contributed significant sums of money to further the mission. They donated furniture and a baptismal font. They published a newsletter that served armed services students overseas. They joined choir or participated in religious plays. They spread the word on campus via “guerrilla marketing.” Between going on mission trips, serving on a host of various committees, leading small group Bible studies and life groups, writing email devotions or serving as housefellows, all of this and

more was done by the students. This ministry would not have existed for as long as it has were it not for their interest, commitment, and faithfulness.

In the introduction to this paper, I mentioned that the college years can be a great threat to the Christian's faith. But after observing the story of Calvary and the Chapel, one could contend the opposite—that the college years can be a great *blessing* to the Christian and their walk with Christ. During the age range of 18 to 22 (give or take a few years in either direction), young adults come to learn a great deal about themselves: what causes are important to them, what they want to do for a career, what type of friends they want to associate with, and what qualities they seek in members of the opposite sex. In terms of spiritual matters, the college years are vital. If the university's sinful temptations and religious attacks grow too strong, that can have a lifelong negative impact on a person's walk with Christ. Conversely, if students have a positive spiritual experience during college and if they have opportunities to grow and nurture their faith, that faith will burn like wildfire into a lifetime of devotion to Christ.

Ultimately, God, not campus ministry, is the reason why any college student makes it through college still a Christian. But so often, campus ministry is the tool that God uses to accomplish this. If the story of UW-Madison teaches us anything, it's this: When students have a safe haven in the spiritual battleground that is college, they feel at peace. When they feel at peace, they feel at home. When they have a home, they take care of it, because it's home. As they take care of it, they develop a set of gifts and aptitudes for lay ministry and the confidence to carry it out. With that confidence, they go into their future churches and join committees, lead Bible studies, cook meals, sing in choir and so much more, with the mindset of "I know I can do this here, because I did it there." When they find that new church home, they take care of it in much the same way, because it's their new home now.

This whole concept of “home” once challenged a Calvary student so greatly that the individual raised the question to Pastor Wegner, “Pastor, why is it that here at Calvary we students often feel closer to our Church than we did back home?” This statement was part of one of Pastor Wegner’s pastoral reports. For context, a portion of that report is printed below.

“One large reason why students who were active in the church in their home communities drift away from it in college is that there they were active and at college they are merely onlookers.” So observes Georgia Harkness in the paperback edition of her book “Religious Living.” It is not merely to prevent this drifting away into “onlookerism” but above all to promote our Lutheran students’ growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that Calvary continues to serve, as it has for the past forty years as the campus arm of the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods at our State University at Madison. . . . To accomplish its goals Calvary centers its activities around the Means of Grace. Our greatest outreach is made through our three Sunday morning services and through our Tuesday Matins and Thursday Vespers. In addition to the preaching of our Lord’s Word and the administration of His sacrament in public worship, we minister to student’s spiritual needs also through study courses, formal and informal discussion groups with programs and topics geared to students’ special interests, confirmation classes, and our much-used program of individual counselling. One answer to the question of how effectively the problem posed by Miss Harkness’ observation is being met at Calvary may be found in the question recently asked by one of our students: “Pastor, why is it that here at Calvary we students often feel closer to our Church than we did back home?”<sup>171</sup>

For at least one student, the program and mission of WELS (at the time) campus ministry stirred in them a zeal for the Lord and a sense of belonging with their fellow classmates at the university. I mentioned that this sense of “home” was cultivated in the student by what they did for the campus ministry. But according to Wegner’s report, the feeling of “home” was achieved another way, and if we’re being honest, this one is the more important of the two. “Home” is felt by hearing the truths of Scripture, receiving the sacrament, and engaging with the Holy Bible on a routine basis. “Home” is felt when Christian college students hear the message that has been the one constant all throughout their lives while everything else around them (classes, majors,

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171. “Report on Calvary Lutheran Chapel and Student Center, Madison, Wis. 4/18/61,” box 836, folder Calvary Lutheran Chapel, WELS Synod Archives.



dorm rooms/living arrangements, friends, significant others, cities, schools, and states) rapidly changes.

One way a campus ministry can combat “onlookerism” is by giving collegians something to do, by giving them activities to engage in. But “onlookerism” is also squashed when the Word of God soothes the collegian and ignites their soul. When Christ stirs the heart of the believer, they want to be active with their faith. They want to serve the Lord whenever and wherever they have the opportunity. That’s the real reason why the students were so active and passionate for Christ over the century. They had a location near campus where they could grow in the Word, and that powerful Word of God strengthened them in their faith and moved them to be more than onlookers.

This pastoral report is almost sixty years old, so perhaps that same view isn’t shared today. Or, maybe it is. What would today’s students think about this “home” concept? I asked three active Chapel students (who are also good friends of mine) a similar question to the one that this individual posed sixty years hence: “‘Chapel has felt more like home to me than my home church (that I grew up in).’ Would you agree or disagree with this statement, and why?” Here were their responses:

Chapel has definitely felt more like home than my home church. Part of that is probably because I come to this physical space more than I do my home church (a few times a week vs. Sunday) but I think most of it comes from the fact that the students at Chapel are my family much more than the members at my home church. They’re friends and confidants and brothers and sisters in Christ.<sup>172</sup>

I’d agree with the statement since there are many opportunities outside of worship for individuals of all ages to have fellowship and strengthen their faith. The presence of the student center at the full-time ministry, as well as weekly Bible studies and social events

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172. Liz, Interview, January 26, 2020. Liz is currently a junior at UW-Madison, studying genetics. She is from Cumming, Georgia. She currently serves as one of Chapel’s eight “housefellows,” she is also active with the praise band and women’s Bible study, among others.

at many campus ministries, have allowed the Lord to provide me with a Christian community that will continue long after my years in college.<sup>173</sup>

A home is where you make it. For me, a home is where I feel comfortable and at ease, a place to relax and enjoy, a place that takes you in and gives you comfort, a place where the people support and encourage you. That's what the Chapel was like to me. Even from freshman year, where I had to make the 15 minute walk from the Lakeshore dorms, Chapel has been my home in all the chaos of Madison. That was where I spent the majority of my time studying. Some weeks, I was there every day of the week. I basically lived there some months. I have had many fond memories of the Chapel: Super Bowl parties, game nights, playing Cribbage by the fireplace, studying with friends, singing in choir, Triple Dollar Dinner, and most importantly, worshipping our Savior. Honestly, during my time in Madison, some of my favorite moments and friends have come from Chapel and all it has to offer. The Chapel was a sacred place that kept my faith burning during my 4 and half years in college. Hearing God's Word on Sundays and Wednesdays each week helped me keep my focus on what is the most important thing in life: our relationship with God, His saving work for us, and proclaiming His message to the rest of the world. Not only that but being surrounded by Christian friends within the Chapel has helped me in incredible ways. It is such a special place for faith, friends, and fellowship that is hard to find elsewhere on campus. I am forever grateful for everything that the Chapel has done for me.<sup>174</sup>

In my interview with former campus pastor Paul Kelm, he shared a story with me that I feel has a place here. He recalled a memorable instance that solidified for him just how special this ministry is.

It [Chapel] was your home away from home, it was not simply a church you went to on Sundays. One of the things that just made the students so endearing: There was a student who was at MATC named Ken, who had muscular dystrophy, he was all crippled up, had trouble moving much at all. He always went on the retreats and other students would carry him from the car up to where we were tenting. The love they had for this guy, it's touching. Maybe in that close fellowship setting Christian love has the chance to thrive a little bit more than it does at the typical congregation. I think that's one of the things that makes the Chapel special. If you think about it, at the average congregation, people don't get that close. They have their friends, I'm sure, but these are people who became friends

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173. Jason, Interview, January 25, 2020. Jason is currently a senior at UW-Madison, studying sports and broadcast journalism. He is from Appleton, Wisconsin. He served as a "housefellow" during the 2018-19 school year. He has written email devotions for Chapel, been an active participant with Christian Faith in Action (CFiA, a Chapel service group), and is a main fixture at all Chapel events.

174. Matt, Interview, January 25, 2020. Matt graduated from UW-Madison in winter 2019 with a degree in engineering. He is from Milwaukee, Wisconsin and currently lives and works there. Like Liz and Jason, Matt was an active presence at Chapel during his four and a half years on campus. He too was an email devotion writer and housefellow (2018-19).

almost overnight, they got thrown together at the university and they looked out for each other.<sup>175</sup>

There's no place like home. When Christ dwells in your heart, you are truly at home.

When you are at home, you love those who share the home with you, your brothers and sisters in Christ. When you are home, love shows itself in service. All of this is done gladly and eagerly, because we were loved first and served first by our Savior. We learn all of this from his Word. May this joyful occasion, the 100th anniversary of WELS campus ministry, spark in all of us a renewed love for all of our "lay seminaries" and vigor to support the vital work they conduct on college campuses all across America.

Once more, the two purposes of this work were to celebrate the history of this particular mission and to recognize the general importance of Lutheran campus ministry. For the final word on the latter, I repeat UW-Madison student Gerald Jenny's words from 1922, spoken well ahead of their time, amended slightly: "Our young men and women need you today. You *will* need them tomorrow."<sup>176</sup>

To give the final word on the former (and on this entire work), I can think of no better person to do so than the late Thomas Trapp. With an avid love for history and for the Chapel (and having mentioned on multiple occasions that he sought to write this history in his retirement), I (and those who knew PT) have no doubt that he would have completed this history in time to commemorate the 100th anniversary. The closing words from PT's farewell sermon on June 25, 2017 seem very appropriate and fitting for today as Chapel looks ahead towards its next 100 years of ministry on the campus of UW-Madison:

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175. Paul Kelm, Interview, November 7, 2019.

176. Gerald Jenny, "Student Mission At Madison," *The Northwestern Lutheran* 9, no. 25 (10 December 1922): 393. Emendation of "may" (in original) to "will" (here) done by author. The original quote in context can be found on page 12 of this work.

Carry on, Chapel. Carry on with your purpose of knowing Jesus Christ and making him known on campus. Carry on with the path of following Jesus Christ in the light of his holy Word. Carry on with the privilege of serving Jesus by serving others. And carry on with the passion of bringing Christ to lost people. Carry on, Chapel, and God bless you.<sup>177</sup>

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177. “Remembering Pastor Tom Trapp: Retirement Sermon, “Carry On, Chapel,” <https://wlchapel.org/ptmemories>. (video 31:03-31:43).

### A Note From The Author

The most recent, thorough, and published history of Calvary/Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel (prior to this work) would be former Campus Pastor Richard Balge's "An Account of WELS Campus Ministry in Madison, Wisconsin," published in 1984. In it he wrote: "The names of relatively few lay leaders have been included in this account. It seemed better to pass over many than to pass over only a few."<sup>178</sup> Throughout this work, a similar practice was followed. In the grand, 100 year history of this mission, (relatively) few names were mentioned and many were omitted.

These missions were served by countless individuals over these 100 years. Every single one of them played an important role in WELS campus ministry in Madison. Inside the scope and parameters of this work, it would have been impossible to note every single individual by name and detail the impact they had on this ministry. The inclusion of any individual is not meant to convey more importance (than one who was omitted) and the exclusion of any individual is not meant to convey less importance (than anyone who was included). This writer apologizes for any offense this may have caused.

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178. Balge, "An Account of WELS Campus Ministry in Madison, Wisconsin," 12.

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Folder History of Chapel, PT Files for Chris

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Folders Calvary Lutheran Chapel, Calvary Lutheran Student Center, 1959-  
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