



Commencement

December 11, 2020 | Mankato, Minnesota



Virtual Commencement Ceremony

Invocation	Chaplain Donald Moldstad <i>Director of Campus Spiritual Life</i>
Welcome	Gene R. Pfeifer <i>President, Bethany Lutheran College</i>
Commencement Address	Rev. David C. Thompson <i>Bethany Lutheran College Regent</i>
Conferring of Degrees and Honors	Jason H. Lowrey <i>Vice President of Academic Affairs</i>
Distinguished Alumnus Award Presentation/Acceptance	Gene R. Pfeifer Beth (Theiste) Davis, on behalf of the Harold 'Hal' Theiste family
Closing Remarks	Gene R. Pfeifer
Benediction	Chaplain Donald Moldstad

Welcome

We welcome you to this ceremony of commencement at Bethany Lutheran College. We are proud of these graduates, confident that they have grown both intellectually and spiritually during their days here. It is our prayer that Bethany Lutheran College, and especially the lessons learned here, will remain in the lives of these young men and women on whichever paths they are led by the Lord.

A Brief History

In 1911, Bethany Ladies College opened with forty-four students, four faculty members, and a mission to educate young women. In 1927, the Norwegian Synod, later known as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), purchased the College. The ELS operated the school as a co-educational high school and junior college until 1969, when the high school department was closed. Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary began in 1946 as a department of the College; in 1975 it became a separate institution.

In May 1996, the Board of Regents resolved to move Bethany from an associate to a baccalaureate degree-granting institution. In the spring of 2001, Bethany awarded its first baccalaureate degrees. Today the College enrolls 750 full and part-time students awarding baccalaureate degrees across twenty-seven majors of study.

Commencement Speaker



David Thompson has been pastor of several churches and is currently at St. Timothy Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lombard, Illinois. He served at Bethany as professor and administrator from 1988-2000. He is director of the Biblical Worldview Conference (held in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Texas, and most recently Illinois) and is chairman of the Apologetics Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. He is author of the book *What in the World Is Going On? Identifying Hollow and Deceptive Worldviews* (NPH). Pastor Thompson is also a member of the Bethany Lutheran College Board of Regents.

He graduated from Bethany Lutheran College in 1975, received his undergraduate degree from Mankato State University, and his Master of Divinity from Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.

He and his wife, Jenna, have six children: three graduated from Bethany, one will be graduating this coming May, another one two years after that, with one more (God willing) attending Bethany in the near future.

Distinguished Alumnus Award



Harold 'Hal' Theiste ('55) is being honored with the Distinguished Alumnus Award posthumously. Theiste, a pioneer in the computer field and a former Bethany Regent, was called home to heaven on December 16, 2018. His wife and four daughters were in attendance for a private ceremony held in Bethany's Honsey Hall on Sunday, November 8, 2020. The family is proud and honored to accept the award on behalf of Harold. Theiste's widow, Arlene, said, "Receiving this award would have meant so much to him, more than any other award he has ever received. He praised and cherished his Bethany education. It helped form a solid foundation for his entire life."

Harold "Hal" Theiste was raised in Minneapolis and is a graduate of Bethany High School (1952), Bethany Lutheran College (1955), and the College of Science, Literature, and the Arts at the University of Minnesota (1957).

After earning his bachelor's degree, Theiste worked for General Mills and Orr Engineering before being hired by Control Data Corporation (CDC) in the Twin Cities in 1960. At CDC for 30 years, he was a programmer, held several management positions, eventually was the company's National Account Manager, and later headed up a CDC subsidiary. Of particular note, Theiste was part of a small group of programmers at CDC who helped create the operating system for Seymour Cray's groundbreaking CDC 1604 supercomputer. In 1977, because of Hal's reputation as a strong technical and business leader, he was selected to oversee programs as the deputy administrator for the U.S. Small Business Administration and took a leave of absence from CDC to serve three years under President Jimmy Carter.

Even in retirement, Theiste never slowed down. He penned a monthly business column through 2013 as part of the Service Corps of Retired Executives, volunteered for the United Way as a business mentor, and always found time to tutor students in math and physics.

Bethany meant so much to Harold, and he gave so much of himself to ensure the mission of the College was always delivered. He served on the BLC Board of Regents from 1984 until he chose to step down in 2017. He also led Bethany High School classes of 1952 and '53, raising funds to create "The Way of the Cross" stained glass window, which sits above the main entrance of Old Main. He also helped to create the Distinguished Alumni Award at Bethany, serving on the selection committee from 2008–14.

Hal's Christian faith was always number one in his life; attending and being an active member in church activities was always a priority for him. At every church that Hal was a member of, he was asked or volunteered to serve in a leadership role to help guide the church and ensure the mission was fulfilled.

Bethany Lutheran College is pleased and honored to present the 2020 Distinguished Alumni Award to Harold Theiste. Blessed be his memory.

Bachelor of Arts Graduates

Meles Desta Abraha

Saint Paul, Minn.
Engineering Sciences
Advisor: Nicklaus Ollrich

Teleko Admasu

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Engineering Sciences
Advisor: Nicklaus Ollrich

Joshua Ray Belingon Amiling

Port Orchard, Wash.
Communication
Advisor: Angela Jahr

Katrina Birgitta Brands

Carthage, Mont.
Psychology
Advisor: Jennifer Kom

David Cecil Evans

Saint Peter, Minn.
History, Legal Studies
Advisors: Ryan MacPherson, Sara Edwards

Mark Theodore Gullixson

Mankato, Minn.
Music
Advisor: Dennis Marzolf

Dalton Richard Huonder

Saint Paul, Minn.
Business Administration
Advisor: Erika Gunderson

Sarah Ode Johnson

Sioux Falls, S.Dak.
Business Administration
Advisor: Erika Gunderson

Emma Marie Kelly

Farmington, Minn.
Business Administration
Advisor: Daniel Mundahl

Emma C. Krszjaniek

Madison, Wisc.
Engineering Sciences, Mathematics
Advisors: Nicklaus Ollrich, Julie Kjeer

Sophie Marie Olson

Green Isle, Minn.
Psychology
Advisor: Jonathan Stadler

Angelica Rose Ramsey

Mosinee, Wisc.
Chemistry
Advisor: Eric Woller

Emeline Christine Ring

Port Saint Lucie, Fla.
English
Advisor: Elisabeth Torres

Audrey Ruth Rundgren

Overland Park, Kans.
Theatre
Advisor: Peter Bloedel

Travis Lee Uecker

Glencoe, Minn.
*Broad Field Social Studies,
Educational Studies*
Advisors: David Reagles, Carrie Pfeifer

Andrew Van Kampen

Green Bay, Wisc.
Engineering Sciences, Mathematics
Advisors: Nicklaus Ollrich, Julie Kjeer

Lex N. Wencil

Cleveland, Minn.
Graphic Design
Advisor: Andrew Overn

Garret Andrew Winch

Mankato, Minn.
Business Administration
Advisor: Kenneth Johnson

Asteway Aemiro Yiheyis

Addis Abeba, Ethiopia
Computer Science
Advisor: John Sehloff

Honor Graduates

Honor graduates wear medallions and gold tassels.

Summa Cum Laude (GPA 3.9 – 4.0)

Katrina Birgitta Brands
David Cecil Evans
Sarah Ode Johnson

Emma Marie Kelly
Sophie Marie Olson
Emeline Christine Ring

Audrey Ruth Rundgren
Lex N. Wencil
Garret Andrew Winch

Magna Cum Laude (GPA 3.67 – 3.89)

Joshua Ray Belington Amiling
Emma C Krszjaniek

Travis Lee Uecker
Andrew Van Kampen

Cum Laude (GPA 3.33 – 3.66)

Mark Theodore Gullixson

Angelica Rose Ramsey

Asteway Aemiro Yiheyis

Graduation honors were calculated based on spring 2020 cumulative GPA.
Publication in today's program is not official documentation of graduation or academic honors.

Scholastic Leadership Society

SLS members wear gold cords.

Katrina Birgitta Brands
Sarah Ode Johnson

Emma Marie Kelly
Andrew Van Kampen

Sigma Tau Delta

International Honor Society for English Students | Honorees wear red and black cords.

Emeline Christine Ring

Board of Regents

Rev. Herbert C. Huhnerkoch, *Chair* – Kissimmee, Fla.

Rev. Mark F. Bartels, *Vice Chair* – Madison, Wis.

William J. Soule, JD, *Secretary* – Chicago, Ill.

Willis E. Anthony, PhD – St. Peter, Minn.

Rev. Erwin J. Ekhoﬀ – Golden Valley, Minn.

Lyle C. Fahning – Prior Lake, Minn.

Joshua T. Mears, PsyD – Lakeville, Minn.

James L. Minor – Danbury, Wis.

Rev. Alexander K. Ring – Port St. Lucie, Fla.

Timothy D. Roemhildt – Mankato, Minn.

Rev. David C. Thompson – Lombard, Ill.

Ex Officio Member:

Rev. John A. Moldstad, President ELS – Mankato, Minn.

Advisory Members:

Gene R. Pfeifer, PhD, President BLC – Mankato, Minn.

Rev. Gaylin Schmeling, President BLTS – Mankato, Minn.

Mission

Bethany Lutheran College provides Christian higher education in a challenging academic environment where personal mentoring guides students to pursue knowledge, truth, and discernment for productive and fulfilling lives.

Purpose

Bethany Lutheran College engages students with the saving knowledge of Christ and assists them in developing their God-given talents and abilities for meaningful lives of service in the family, church, and society. A program of study grounded in the liberal arts and taught through the discerning lens of a Christian worldview equips students with knowledge, understanding, and adaptable skills.

Vision

Bethany Lutheran College aspires to produce compassionate graduates firmly grounded in Christian faith and teaching who REFLECT CHRIST'S LOVE with integrity, character, and unshakable values;

- to be a center for EXCELLENCE IN ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP and in all aspects of higher education;
- to place a priority on PERSONAL MENTORING from faculty and staff to students;
- to provide OPPORTUNITIES for students to identify and develop their God-given talents and abilities; and
- to positively impact the lives of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and supporters through a CARING CHRISTIAN ACADEMIC COMMUNITY.

Core Values

COMMITMENT TO THE GOSPEL – Because God's Son, Jesus Christ, has lived perfectly in our place and paid for all sins, God declares all people to be innocent in His sight, an innocence received by faith. Bethany therefore proclaims this Good News to students that they may believe, and grow in faith and in the knowledge of Jesus as their sure hope for eternal life.

PURSUIT OF THE TRUTH – Grounded in the liberal arts, the curriculum promotes a search for knowledge and wisdom by fostering independent critical thinking through the discerning lens of the Bible as the ultimate source of truth in order to support students' spiritual development, intellectual and creative growth, self-understanding, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning.

FOCUS ON THE STUDENT – The College places the spiritual, intellectual, physical, social, and emotional needs of the student first in all decisions, policies, and procedures.

Statement of Faith

Bethany Lutheran College is a Christian liberal arts college. The College and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod are committed to the teachings of the Bible as the inerrant Word of God – the only authority for faith and life. The statements of faith known as the Lutheran Confessions are accepted as the correct understanding of the teachings of the Bible.

This commitment to the Confessions is summarized by the principles of the Lutheran Reformation: Grace Alone, Faith Alone, and Scripture Alone. Specifically, the College confesses that salvation is a free gift from God's grace alone, not dependent upon our works. We receive forgiveness for our sins through faith in Christ alone, which is produced in the individual's heart by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God and the Sacraments. Scripture alone is the standard by which all teachings and practices ultimately are evaluated.

College Seal



The College seal was made official by a resolution of the Board of Regents in 1932. The idea of the college seal originated with Ruth Seidel, who was an instructor at Bethany, and her artist brother, Wilbur Seidel of Chicago, who furnished the detailed drawing.

The seal is distinctive and most appropriate. The inscription “ΕΝΟΣ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΧΡΕΙΑ” is Greek and means “One Thing Is Needful,” the words of Christ spoken to Martha at that first Bethany. The “One Thing Needful” is the Gospel of the crucified Savior, expressed by the cross upon which the inscription is placed. For Bethany Lutheran College we thereby declare that there is no true education, even as there is no salvation, without the Gospel of Christ,

Son of God and Savior of the world from sin. That Gospel is, and must remain, the heart and soul of every educational effort at our beloved institution. The cross is encircled by a star with twelve points, upon which are shown rays of light extending from the cross. As the twelve apostles were commissioned to be bearers of the light from the cross, so the goal of our training at Bethany must not be our own advancement, but the spread of the Gospel.

Mace

The college mace is a symbol of power or authority. Its origins can be traced to early medieval times when it was literally an instrument of power as a war club. It eventually evolved into the ceremonial scepter of monarchs. For colleges and universities it symbolizes the authority to grant degrees given to the faculty by the state or church. The mace is carried by the chair of the faculty assembly.

The mace was designed and carved by Eric Ouren. The wooden cross at the top of the mace is carved from one of the “Koshkonong Oaks.” The first Norwegian Lutheran worship service in America was conducted under the oak trees by Lake Koshkonong near Madison, Wisconsin, in 1844. The shaft of the mace has three bands over what looks to be “roots” connecting the top to the bottom. This is reminiscent of Scandinavian/Viking carving, something that connects Bethany to the old world and its Norwegian-American cultural origins. At the base of the shaft is a small piece of the old Bethany gates. These gates had been part of the foundation of a planned conservatory next to Old Main that was never finished. Inset in the top of the mace is a bronze casting of the college seal.



Medallion



The presidential medallion signifies the authority of the college’s chief executive. The college president wears the medallion at commencement, opening service, and other times when academic apparel are appropriate. The medallion is hand tooled, cast in oxidized bronze and hand polished. It measures 3-5/8 inches in diameter with a decorative bezel around the three-inch medallion. The presidential medallion hangs on a bronze chain individually listing the past presidents of the college on a small metal banner. The current president’s banner is in the center above the medallion, and is separated from those of past presidents by leaf clusters. The seal of Bethany Lutheran College is engraved on the front side of the medallion.

BETHANY LUTHERAN COLLEGE

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