



Commencement

December 8, 2023 | Mankato, Minnesota



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. Your presence at this milestone in their lives is another sign of your support and love, which has continued over many years, and which we know they deeply appreciate. 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 the path the Lord chooses for them.

Order of Procession

The commencement ceremony begins with the procession of participants. The chair of the faculty assembly leads the procession carrying the college mace, followed by the college president, the chaplain, the vice president of academic affairs, and faculty marshal. The graduates continue the procession followed by faculty advisors, faculty emeriti, and the remaining faculty concludes the procession.

Academic Apparel

Today's graduates and faculty members are wearing ceremonial regalia that conform to traditions and practices of the academy. The graduates are wearing black gowns with an open pointed sleeve. Ceremony participants with advanced or terminal degrees wear gowns that represent their earned degree. Those holding a master's degree wear a gown with an oblong sleeve, open at the wrist. The oblong shape is square cut in the back, the front section tailored with an arc cut. Those who have earned a doctorate wear a gown distinguished by velvet trim on the front facings and three stripes on the sleeves. This trim may be black or may have color identifying the individual's major field of academic achievement.

Ceremonial regalia also includes academic hoods. The size and cut of the academic hood indicates the level and type of degree an individual holds. The lining of the hood, in Bethany's case red and white, indicates the school colors and the outer velvet trim indicates the bachelor's degree. As with the bachelor's hood, the master's and doctor's hoods have the same color designations in the lining of the school where the degree was earned and velvet trim indicating the field in which the degree is held.

A Brief History

In 1911, Bethany Ladies College opened with forty-four students and 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 start moving Bethany from an associate to a baccalaureate degree-granting institution. In the spring of 2001, Bethany entered a new era in its history by granting its first baccalaureate degrees. Bethany continued with academic program growth by offering its first master of arts program in 2021.

Photography & Video

Professional photography and video will be taken at today's ceremony. Bethany will be sending one 4" x 6" photograph taken with the president to each graduate. Candid photographs from the ceremony will be available to download and a video link will be available online at blc.edu/commencement.

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 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



At Bethany, the presidential medallion symbolizes the responsibility of the office the president to provide sound, Christian collegiate education for each and every student. 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.

Commencement Ceremony

Pre-Ceremony Music

Winter from The Four Seasons by Antonio Vivaldi

**violin solo performed by '23 December graduate, Madeline Gutzke*

Brandenburg Concerto, No. 4 by J.S. Bach, arranged Jasinski

Chamber Orchestra, Conducted by Prof. Benjamin Faugstad

Processional*

*Please rise when the procession enters

Highland Cathedral by Korb and Roeber, arranged Dawson

Chamber Orchestra

Invocation

Chaplain Donald Moldstad

Director of Campus Spiritual Life

Welcome

Gene R. Pfeifer, PhD

President

Commencement Address

Rev. Mark DeGarmeaux

Professor of Religion, Music

Presentation of Candidates
for Degrees and Honors

Theodore E. Manthe, PhD

Vice President of Student Affairs

Conferring of Degrees
and Awarding of Diplomas

Gene R. Pfeifer, PhD

President

College Choir

We Walk By Faith - Kenneth T. Kosche

Directed by David Paulson, Assistant Professor of Music

We walk by faith and not by sight;
No gracious words we hear
From Christ, who spoke as none e'er spoke;
But we believe Him Near.

We may not touch His hands and side,
Nor follow where He trod;
But in His promise we rejoice,
Ad cry, "My Lord and God!"

Help then, O Lord, our unbelief;
And may our faith abound
To call on You where You are near
And seek where You are found;

That, when our life of faith is done,
In realms of clearer light
We may behold You as You are,
With full and endless sight

Author Henry Alford, 1844

Benediction

Chaplain Donald Moldstad

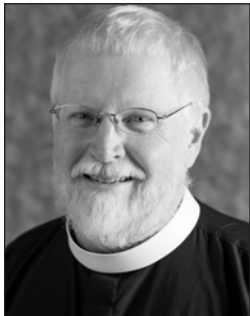
*Please remain seated for the recessional

Recessional Music

Kaleb Schmidt, organ

A reception for the graduates will be held following the ceremony.

Commencement Speaker



Mark DeGarmeaux grew up in southwest Wisconsin and attended Luther High School (Onalaska, Wisconsin). He holds a B.S. Elementary Education (Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota), Master of Divinity (Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota), and Master of Sacred Theology (STM, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin). For ten years he served as a parish pastor in northeast Iowa. Since 1995 he has served at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minnesota, first as chaplain and teaching religion classes, and currently as chapel organist and teaching languages (Hebrew, Latin, and Norwegian), organ lessons, and church music classes.

His interests include theology, music, and languages. He was one of three members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod worship committee that prepared the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*. His recently-published *Every Sunday Organist* is an anthology of easy hymn preludes (original and classic) for organ or piano, for each Sunday of the church year. As one of the organists at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Mankato, he particularly enjoys playing Baroque works of Bach, Buxtehude, and Pachelbel, and 20th century North German works of Micheelsen, Walcha, and Bender.

He has translated hundreds of hymns, especially Norwegian and Danish hymns. Publications of his translations include: *Book of Family Prayer* by N. J. Laache; *Mother of the Reformation* by Ernst Kroker; *U. V. Koren's Works*; Pontoppidan's Catechism Explanation (*Truth unto Godliness*, in an anthology); and *The Venerable and Adorable Eucharist* by Tom Hardt. He also translated items for the newest *Luther's Works* volumes. He wrote articles for *Lutheran Service Book: Companion to the Hymns*. Mark was co-editor of *My Savior's Guest: A Festschrift in Honor of Erling Trygve Teigen*, and associate editor of *The Christian Year of Grace*, by Johann Spangenberg, translated by Matthew Carver. He has been an instructor for Norwegian language weekends for adult learners at Skogfjorden near Bemidji, Minnesota.

In 2024, God willing, Mark and his wife Rebecca (née Krueger) will celebrate 40 years of marriage. They enjoy reading, traveling, British comedies, classic movies, and attending music, art, and theatre events.

Bachelor of Arts Graduates

Rebekah Sophia Brase
Alvo, Nebr.
History

Reed William Brown
Saint Michael, Minn.
Business Administration

Taryn Quinn Christensen
South Sioux City, Nebr.
Biology

Madeline Anna Gutzke
Mankato, Minn.
Music, Psychology

Matthias Luke Harman
Wykoff, Minn.
Computer Science

Holly Morgan Harris
Mankato, Minn.
Theatre

Izayah Dmitri Harrison
Mankato, Minn.
Business Administration

Annika Jean Holmstrom
Lino Lakes, Minn.
Elementary Education

Eva Grace Jacobsen
The Dalles, Oreg.
Psychology

Naomi Grace Juarez
New Richland, Minn.
Psychology

Annika Grace Koukkari-Mason
Robbinsdale, Minn.
English

Chloe Carol Kuhlman
Watertown, S.Dak.
*Elementary Education, Mathematics,
Mathematics Education*

Henry Dennis Laue
Mahtomedi, Minn.
Business Administration

Jordan Lonn Lisk
West Salem, Wisc.
Psychology

Kurt Alonso Lugo
Madelia, Minn.
Elementary Education

Tamara Lynn Omar
Bloomer, Wisc.
Music

Hunter Jon Reasor
Le Sueur, Minn.
Business Administration

Noah Thomas Rittierodt
Auburn, Wash.
Media Arts

Philip Antonio Ronza
Blaine, Minn.
Business Administration

Alexis Maria Scharlemann
Redwood Falls, Minn.
Business Administration

Bjug Alexander Schmidt
Naples, Fla.
Business Administration

Mackenzie Schmidt
Mankato, Minn.
Communication

Mitchell Benjamin Shambour
New Prague, Minn.
Biology

Jessica Nkanga Simba
Lubumbashi, Democratic
Republic of the Congo
Business Administration

Mason Paul Steffen
Kiel, Wisc.
Exercise Science

Benjamin James Stelter
Mankato, Minn.
Media Arts

Destiny Duang Sybounheuan
Mountain Lake, Minn.
Elementary Education

Colin James Ryan Trueblood
Winnebago, Minn.
Communication

Nathan Wildauer
Port Washington, Wisc.
Business Administration

Job Bradley Wosmek
Mankato, Minn.
Computer Science

Honor Graduates

Honor graduates wear medallions and gold tassels.

Summa Cum Laude (GPA 3.9 – 4.0)

Madeline Anna Gutzke
Eva Grace Jacobsen

Tamara Lynn Omar
Alexis Maria Scharlemann

Magna Cum Laude (GPA 3.67 – 3.89)

Rebekah Sophia Brase
Holly Morgan Harris
Naomi Grace Juarez

Annika Grace Koukkari-Mason
Chloe Carol Kuhlman
Noah Thomas Rittierodt

Mitchell Benjamin Shambour
Destiny Duang Sybounheuan

Cum Laude (GPA 3.33 – 3.66)

Izayah Dmitri Harrison
Kurt Alonso Lugo

Nathan Wildauer
Job Bradley Wosmek

Graduation honors were calculated based on spring 2023 cumulative GPA.
Publication in today's program is not official documentation of graduation or academic honors.

Scholastic Leadership Society

SLS members wear gold cords.

Rebekah Sophia Brase
Madeline Anna Gutzke
Holly Morgan Harris

Annika Grace Koukkari-Mason
Chloe Carol Kuhlman
Tamara Lynn Omar

Sigma Tau Delta

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

Annika Grace Koukkari-Mason

Board of Regents

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

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Lyle C. Fahning – Prior Lake, Minn.

Rev. Aaron Ferkenstad – Golden Valley, Minn.

Mark D. Madson – Mankato, Minn.

Joshua T. Mears, PsyD – Lakeville, Minn.

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Ex Officio Member:

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Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Advisory Members:

Gene R. Pfeifer, PhD, President,
Bethany Lutheran College

Rev. Timothy A. Hartwig, President,
Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary

Scholarships

A special thank you to the businesses, individuals, and families who have established these scholarships for the benefit of Bethany students. The following scholarship funds each have assets of \$15,000 or more.

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Ruth Abrahamson Scholarship
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Luther Younge Family Scholarship

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Esther Gullixson Jackson Scholarship

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 George Andrew Rossing Gullixson Scholarship
 Henry and Sarah Lillegard Gullixson Scholarship
 Valborg Gullixson Natvig Scholarship
 Walther Christian Gullixson Scholarship
 Haarstick Scholarship
 Hagen Family Scholarship
 Jon and Christina Hansen Scholarship
 Peter T. and Carolyn A. Harstad Scholarship
 Mabel O. Haugen Scholarship
 Health and Wellness Scholarship
 Walter Hedrich Scholarship
 Helland Family Scholarship
 Darlo and Charlotte Hill Scholarship
 Russell Hoiland Scholarship
 Holte Family Scholarship
 Paul and Valerie Holzhueter Scholarship
 Rudolph and Elizabeth Honsey Scholarship
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 Kopp Investment Advisors Presidential Scholarship
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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.

BETHANY LUTHERAN COLLEGE

700 Luther Drive, Mankato, Minnesota 56001

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