

A Time to Worship



It is 9:20 a.m. on a typical Monday morning at the seminary: time for morning chapel. The students, faculty, staff, and some visiting guests have entered the chapel, walked past the trickling water of the baptismal font, and found their seats. A seminary professor is seated behind the ambo. A seminary student is seated at the organ bench introducing the opening hymn. It is a time to build up the faith of all present. It is a time to build up the skills required to serve as a leader in worship. It is a time for the body of Christ to be built up as those present hear God's Word and sing God's praises together.

At this chapel service, an opening hymn is sung, with the powerful voices resonating throughout the chapel. The invocation and Scripture reading follow. Then the speaker delivers his devotion. When the devotion concludes, another hymn is sung. A closing prayer and the Aaronic blessing bring the chapel service to a close. It lasts only fifteen to twenty minutes, a brief but integral part of the morning routine.

So much goes into each chapel service. A group of seven seminary seniors serve on the worship committee under the direction of Dean of Chapel Aaron Christie. This committee plans the readings and hymns for each week based on the lectionary of the church year. In a typical week, a seminary professor leads chapel on Monday morning. He preaches on the Gospel from the previous Sunday, which sets the tone for the week's devotions. For the rest of the week, students lead chapel and are assigned readings from the weekly lectionary to use as the basis for their devotions. As a student composes his devotion, his faculty advisor provided feedback. Leading chapel is one of many opportunities for students to build their preaching skills during their time at the seminary.

Each day, musicians among the seminary students and professors take turns providing organ or piano accompa-

niment. Occasionally, other musical ensembles, including brass, strings, and percussion, participate. Each school year, a second-year seminary student is appointed to serve as the campus "sacristan." He is responsible for updating the hymn boards, scheduling chapel preachers, and maintaining the appearance of the chapel. Additionally, a student or staff member runs the audio-visual booth, ensuring proper sound and lighting and enabling chapel services to be livestreamed.

Quite often there are special chapel services at the seminary. On Friday mornings, the daily chapel service is usually expanded to incorporate a liturgical setting from *Christian Worship*. Festivals of the church year, both major and minor, are sometimes celebrated, especially if they occur on a school day. Evening chapel services are often held on Wednesday evenings at 8:00 p.m. (except during the seasons of Advent and Lent when all are encouraged to worship with a local congregation). These evening services are led by student and faculty volunteers.

So many people put so much effort into the various chapel services that take place at the seminary. At the center of all this effort, though, stands not our work, but Christ's. Prominently displayed in the seminary chapel is a crucifix depicting Christ on the cross. My eyes are often drawn to it when I am in the chapel. My heart and mind are so often directed to Christ on the cross during the chapel services that take place at the seminary. As hearts and minds are directed to Christ, faith is built up. "Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness" (Colossians 2:6-7).

You are welcome to join the seminary for chapel, held Monday-Friday at 9:20 a.m. when classes are in session, either in person or online at wls.edu, and to watch past chapel services at wls.edu/wls-chapel. †

Noah Melso is a 2026 graduate of the seminary.