**2019 Symposium on Christian Apologetics**The worldview of North Americans has changed dramatically in the two decades since the beginning of the millennium. Christian beliefs and morals are becoming increasingly foreign and unfamiliar to the majority of people that our congregations are trying to reach. Outreach approaches developed in the 20th century and which our pastors were trained in often don’t result in engaging 21st century prospects in conversation when a pastor is reaching out to them with the gospel.

With this changed harvest field in mind, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary will be presenting a symposium on Christian Apologetics on September 16-17, 2019. Three pastors who have ministered exclusively in the 21st century are preparing this year’s essays with three of our seasoned seminary professors serving as their sounding boards. The working titles for the three essays are:

*An Introduction to and Defense of Apologetics Michael Berg*

Prof. Berg will define what apologetics is and examine how the apostles and prophets as well as the church fathers presented the truths of God to the people of their day. He will make the case that apologetics is really a ministry of caring. When a pastor understands the need that the lost have for someone to bring the gospel to them, he’ll be moved to engage them in discussion. And he will wisely distinguish between the use of reason in such discussions and the need for faith.

*Lutheran Doctrine and Apologetics Luke Thompson*

Lutheran theology informs how Lutheran pastors do outreach. What Scripture has to say about the total depravity of the unregenerate, about the natural knowledge of God, about how the Holy Spirit works, about how many biblical truths cannot be proven empirically all play a role in the way a pastor approaches the task of presenting the gospel. Pastor Thompson’s essay will examine these and other doctrinal truths and the role they play in doing apologetics.

*Apologetics in Our Current Worldview Justin Cloute*

Pastor Cloute will examine the characteristics of postmodernism and how they affect the way the church engages the lost. He will explore angles such as how the use of narrative engages 21st century listeners and the role community plays in their concerns and causes.

Symposium sessions begin in the campus auditorium at 1:00 pm on Monday; two essays are presented. The evening affords an opportunity for fellowship. Tuesday’s sessions begin with worship at 8:00 am after which the third essay is read. The symposium adjourns at 12:30 pm.

The registration fee for WELS and ELS pastors is $60 ($30 for retired pastors). Online registration will begin after July 1, 2019. If online registration is impossible, email or call Diane Heisler at Diane.Heisler@wls.wels.net or 262-242-8141. The essays, faculty responses and worship will be streamed via the seminary’s website. Watch for streaming schedule as the event approaches. Copies of printed materials will be available for downloading the day they are presented.

*Bill Tackmier*