

# Giving Thanks To God for 40 Years of Blessings!

Prepared—NOT Protected!



Generating a **JESUS** Generation



**Martin Luther Jr/Sr High School**

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[www.martinlutherhs.com](http://www.martinlutherhs.com)

est. 1983

**Honoring Christ...Welcoming All**



## **Martin Luther High School, est. 1983**

### **Honoring Christ...Welcoming All**

The dream of a Lutheran high school in southern Minnesota began in 1947. After many years of prayer, study, and planning, the first classes began in 1983 in a rented store-front in downtown Northrop with 19 students in grades 9-10.



Charter students in grades 9 and 10 of the brand new Martin Luther High School.  
First row: Cheryl Krenz, Ruth Ann Dougherty, Chris Becker, Paul Mumme, Sarah Wagner, Scott Garrison, LeAnn Wessel, Nellie Gerdes, Timothy Henning. Row 2: Kathleen Hagen, Lori Wiederhoeft, Yolanda Brummond, Melissa Geistfeld, Kevin Schafer, Diane Knaak, Julie Weihe, Keith Schuder. Back row: Paul Engelby.  
Not pictured: Jenny Baker.

Over the decades, the prayers, time, energy, and countless resources devoted to the development, growth and sustenance of the Martin Luther High School Ministry have been phenomenal. Every prayer raised up on behalf of this ministry, every act of volunteerism, every meeting, every hour of planning, every block laid, every word of support, every penny given, every child attending MLHS, is a gift from God and an integral part of His intricate plan for mankind.

For the past 40 years Martin Luther High School (MLHS), Northrop has been serving our community by ***“Preparing students for discipleship until Christ’s return.”*** The MLHS Ministry has impacted the lives of 541 young men and women who have gone out into the world making a difference in whatever career they choose. Teens flourish in the nurturing atmosphere and individualized academic standards offered at MLHS. The opportunity for teens to reach their fullest potential guided by God’s love has made a real difference in their lives.

The MLHS Ministry is far-reaching. Students attend from eight Minnesota or Iowa school districts, many traveling over an hour each morning and night. In the past students have come from Amboy, Blue Earth, Ceylon, Fairmont, Hanska, Jackson, Lake Crystal, Lakefield, Madelia, Mapleton, Northrop, St. James, Truman, Vernon Center, Welcome, Winnebago, Truman, and Estherville and Milford, Iowa.

The support for this Ministry is phenomenal. Sixteen Lutheran churches throughout southern Minnesota make up the Martin Luther High School Association which operates and supports MLHS.



**Full Member Churches** are Immanuel Lutheran, Fairmont; Salem Lutheran, Madelia; St. James Lutheran, Northrop; St. John’s Lutheran, South Branch; St. John’s Lutheran, Willow Creek; St. Paul Lutheran, Fairmont; St. Paul’s Lutheran, Truman; St. Paul’s Lutheran, Wilbert; Trinity Lutheran, Fieldon; and Zion Lutheran, Fraser.

**Associate Member Churches** are Immanuel Lutheran, Galena; Lutheran Church of Our Savior, Winnebago; St. John’s Lutheran, Antrim; St. John’s Lutheran, Good Thunder; and Trinity Lutheran, Trimont. All member churches are committed to providing spiritual and financial support. Congregations are represented by delegates which comprise the governing body. All churches are to encourage student enrollment and promote MLHS as an extension of their ministry.

**Full Member** congregations commit that they will:

- encourage members to enroll their students at Martin Luther High School
- participate in Association capital fund campaigns
- pray regularly during their worship service(s) for Martin Luther High School
- view and promote Martin Luther High School as an extension of the congregational ministry.
- Forward financial support to the Association on a preferred monthly basis according to a long term support plan. To be a full member of the Association, a congregation will support Martin Luther High School at a rate of at least 6% of its budget/income. Each congregation with a school will support MLHS at a rate of at least 4% of the congregation’s budget/income.

**Supporting Member** congregations in the Association commit that they will:

- encourage members to enroll their students at Martin Luther High School.
- participate in Association capital fund campaigns.
- pray regularly during their worship service(s) for Martin Luther High School



and view and promote Martin Luther High School as an extension of the congregational ministry.

- commit to regular financial support on a preferred monthly basis to the level of 1-3% of the congregation's budget/income.

Regular financial support also comes from faithful friends nationwide. It is by God's grace, and through the support of individuals and businesses, that MLHS can continue to impact the lives of teens in a way that only a Christian school can. Because God's Word is present in everything we do and say, MLHS receives minimal government funding. The school relies on tuition, donations, and grants to sustain the excellent educational services provided. Today's culture has made it a harder and harder task to operate efficiently and still maintain our high standard of excellence.

Emily Anderson, the Commissioner for **National Lutheran School Accreditation** for the MN South District, attended the Martin Luther Jr/Sr High School October Delegate Association Meeting. She extended greetings from MN South LCMS District President Rev. Dr. Lucas Woodford and from Mr. Sean Martens our District Education Executive.

"Over a year ago, Martin Luther Jr/Sr High School began an intensive process of



self-evaluation and introspection to become reaccredited through National Lutheran School Accreditation. This work included reviewing and rating the school based on a comprehensive set of standards and gathering evidence to validate the ratings. The process culminated with a visit this past spring by a team of educational professionals. They spent three days at the school interviewing constituents that represent Martin Luther Jr/Sr High School, including staff, parents, students, and board members. The team observed classrooms and reviewed all the

supporting documentation. At the conclusion of the visit, the team made a recommendation for accreditation in good standing to the District Accreditation Commission who, after review, also agreed with the recommendation and passed it on to the National Accreditation Commission. At the end of July, I had the privilege of being part of the NAC in St. Louis, MO, where after a third comprehensive review, the final approval for accreditation was granted," said Emily.

She went on to say, "Achieving accreditation is a tremendous accomplishment. It means MLHS is a school of academic quality in a Lutheran context. NLSA is highly respected for the quality it demands in our schools and regularly undergoes a rigorous review process by the state non-public school council in order to be recognized as an accrediting agency by the State of Minnesota."

Emily presented the NLSA certificate to Stephanie Zellmer (left), Secretary of the MLHS Board of Directors. Stephanie, a 2011 alum, served on the MLHS committee who prepared the documents for review by the Accreditation team. This certification is valid until 2028. The MLHS Administration looks forward to implementing the recommendations given by the NLSA Committee. The best is yet to come.

The **2023-2026 Strategic Plan** was presented to the Delegates at the October



meeting also. It is based on Proverbs 16:3, "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He will establish your plans." Our continued focus will be on:

1. **Ministry:** Pursue additional association church membership(s) and add a community event.

2. **Student Life-Academic, Athletic, Social:** Encourage and develop an excellent 3D Printing Program and maximize our Greenhouse/Energies Classroom = another science teacher (part-time).

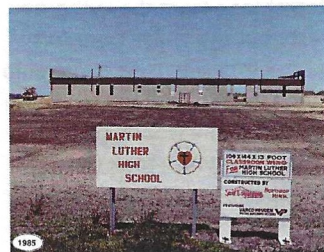
3. **Communications:** Big Ask-Give monthly prayer requests to Association churches; conduct surveys with parents & students; promote a cooperative Lutheran School marketing approach: (healthy grade schools = healthy high school), and initiate bi-monthly local principals' meetings.

4. **Administration, Staff and Board:** Call new administrator/principal, establish a training/on-boarding process for board members, comprehensive staff development plan/on-boarding process for staff/faculty, and establish a Jr High Handbook.

5. **Facility (infrastructure):** "Clean up" cloud data base, initiate funding for air conditioning in gym, explore need for additional junior high space.

6. **Financial:** Big Ask-Continue a strong push for more members and increased giving within the Knights Brigade and continue and develop 3rd party income via This is Most Certainly Brew Coffee and products from the greenhouse, and emphasize MLHS Endowment dollars to our donors.

The Lord has constantly created, directed, and upheld our plans during the past 40+ years. From the beginning He has orchestrated and blessed this Ministry, providing all of our needs.



AND I HEARD GOD ASK,  
**WHO WILL I SEND?**

AND I SAID,  
**HERE I AM!  
SEND ME!**

ISAIAH 6:8

In the 2022-2023 school year He called us to assist St. James Lutheran School, Northrop by adding **Junior High** to our campus. This partnership has proven to be a blessing to students and to both schools. 1987 alum, Teresa Kiehl was hired to be their homeroom teacher. Since that time, enrollment in grades seven and eight has grown with several students transferring in from other schools. We welcome the opportunity to guide and nurture junior high students at MLHS.

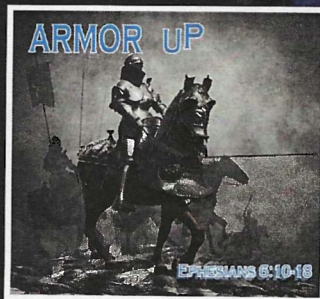


**The pioneers of junior high at Martin Luther Jr/Sr High School. Front row: Pastor John Henry, Veronica Balderas, Teresa Kiehl. Second row, Grade 8: Samuel Marroquin-Balderas, Cedar Bohlsen, John Henry IV, Noah Johnson. Third row, Grade 8: Caleb Meyer, Levi Stevens. Fourth row, Grade 8: Ashley Burkey, Kate Kolbe. Very Back Center, Grade 7: Hailey Simpson.**



The snowy, icy, muddy winter of 2022-2023 proved to be a catalyst for a new concrete parking lot. When school buses had problems navigating our campus and cars became stuck, the idea of securing bids for concreting the parking lot was entertained. It seemed like a ridiculously unrealistic idea when the operating budget was at a deficit. But God had other plans! *Before bids from contractors were even secured, a large, unexpected donation came from the generous donor who funded the original concrete strip in 2015! Then notification came that MLHS was receiving a large estate gift for the next three years that could NOT be used for general operating.* When Board of Directors reviewed the circumstances, the consensus was “the handwriting is on the wall,” and the Board decided to go forward with a leap of faith—again. The **“On Christ, the Solid Rock, Parking Lot Project”** was launched on April 22.

Throughout the summer the Lord assured us of His presence. Generous, astounding gifts poured in from everywhere! One couple who had no connection with MLHS read the article in the Sentinel and donated \$10,000. Another person saw the commercial made by Braden Roiger on Facebook and within two hours came up and gave \$2,000. Another couple (with the blessing of their children) rolled over the ownership of their Thrivent Insurance policy to the project. We were blessed with the expert guidance and frugal diligence of Rosburg Construction and Diamond Concrete and Construction. We were blessed with a donation and 0% interest loan from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund, which gave us the latitude to carry out the entire pour this summer. We were blessed with a courageous Board of Directors who took ownership of the project. We were blessed with many volunteers who helped with the landscaping. We were blessed with an army of donors who came out of the woodwork thrilled to be a part of the project. We just hung on for the ride which took us from \$0.00 and mud to \$294,169.67 and over 53,000 square feet of 6” concrete with rebar in 176 days! To God be the glory! Thank you!



**THE NUTS & BOLTS  
OF MINISTRY**

## 40TH ANNIVERSARY KNIGHTS' BRIGADE

**In honor of 40 years of the MLHS teaching Ministry we are asking you to join the Knights' Brigade. Consistent donations stabilize the MLHS Ministry allowing it to run in a professional manner reflecting good Christian stewardship. Since 2004, generous donors have faithfully strengthened God's work here at MLHS through monthly EFT giving. This membership is an easy way to give back to God's work just as you have been blessed.**

**For details contact  
Marge Thiesse, Director of Development.  
Email: [margethiesse@martinlutherhs.com](mailto:margethiesse@martinlutherhs.com)**





# Spot Light on the

-Romans 13:12

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## Intercession Required

Over the past several weeks there have been events, circumstances, and/or comments that have led to a dramatic heavy sigh. In fact we started joking that a heavy sigh should be the theme for the next school year. There is something about a heavy sigh that conveys much more than a dissatisfaction with the circumstance(s).

There is an emotional attachment and personal investment to the circumstance(s) far more than mere logistics of temporary hurdles. As we deal with teenagers and their sets of circumstances, we find ourselves exhaling great sighs from time to time. We are fully vested in their success(es). It is much deeper than "getting the grade."

We, MLHS, understand what is at stake. Getting the right foundation under a child early on can be a major difference maker. It makes a difference in eternity. It also can save a bunch of pain as we do not all have to learn the hard way. A Biblical foundation in discernment can promote greater degrees of success in daily living, vocational pursuits, and social circles, including marriage.

As we discussed the nature of our sighs, we concluded the sigh itself is really a prayer in which we are not exactly sure what to ask. Romans 8:26-27 immediately jumped to mind: "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God."

What an incredible relief as a parent to know God is already on the job of interceding for us on behalf of our kids!!! At MLHS we feel the same way! We want the best for the students and their families. And when mistakes happen, and they will, we can sigh with Hope. We have been sighing for the past 40 years. We will keep sighing, God will keep interceding, and Biblical foundations will continue to be built. ***Come sigh with us for another 40 years!***

Come Lord Jesus, Amen!

Paul Steinhaus, Principal  
paulsteinhaus@martinlutherhs.com



# Thank You

## Vision Statement



Martin Luther JR./SR. High School  
is:

**P**artnered with Families and Congregations  
**E**mpowered by the Gospel  
**A**cademically Accredited  
**C**hrist-Centered and Cross-Curricular  
**E**ngaged in Excellence

## Mission Statement



Preparing students  
for discipleship  
until  
**Christ's** return

## The ACT<sup>®</sup> Report 2022

Table 1.2. Five Year Trends—Average ACT Scores

| Year | English |       | Mathematics |       | Reading |       | Science |       | Composite |       |
|------|---------|-------|-------------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|-----------|-------|
|      | School  | State | School      | State | School  | State | School  | State | School    | State |
| 2018 | 21.6    | 20.2  | 22.1        | 21.4  | 21.4    | 21.7  | 21.6    | 21.4  | 21.7      | 21.3  |
| 2019 | 21.5    | 20.3  | 22.7        | 21.4  | 23.7    | 21.8  | 25.0    | 21.5  | 22.6      | 21.4  |
| 2020 | 25.6    | 20.0  | 24.1        | 21.3  | 23.7    | 21.8  | 26.0    | 22.0  | 25.0      | 21.3  |
| 2021 | 23.5    | 20.2  | 22.5        | 21.5  | 26.0    | 22.2  | 23.0    | 22.0  | 23.8      | 21.6  |
| 2022 | 22.2    | 19.7  | 21.8        | 20.7  | 21.8    | 21.7  | 21.7    | 21.4  | 21.9      | 21.0  |

MLHS students' ACT scores  
are consistently at—or  
above—state and national  
averages in all categories.

| Year | MLHS | State |
|------|------|-------|
| 2014 | 22.3 | 22.9  |
| 2015 | 24.1 | 22.7  |
| 2016 | 24.0 | 21.1  |
| 2017 | 23.6 | 21.5  |
| 2018 | 21.7 | 21.3  |
| 2019 | 22.6 | 21.4  |
| 2020 | 25.0 | 20.6  |
| 2021 | 22.4 | 21.6  |
| 2022 | 21.9 | 21.0  |



*"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.  
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."*

*Matthew 5:8-9*

*May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,  
guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

*Wishing you a happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas,  
and may God bless you in 2024.*