Supporting the Wider Church

Bishop Emeritus Shelley Wickstrom, who partnered to establish both funds in 2016, said the average cost of residential seminary education is upward of $ 30,000 per year; most students spend three years in residential education, plus a year of internship. Scholarship funds for Alaskan leaders supports the gifts Alaskans have to offer. **"We prepare students to serve the church, not the synod. This is a huge gift to the church at large," Wickstrom said.**

The tuition reimbursement fund helps new Alaskan leaders start well, and maybe choose Alaska in the first place.

"The goal is to reduce the debt burden for our pastors," said Wickstrom. "It impacts where pastors can take a call." Wickstrom added that debt can also impact whether a new pastor is able to purchase a car or other necessities. There can be additional expenses when new people come to Alaska if they are not from a cold climate, such as boots, outerwear and other gear.

Office of the Alaska Synod

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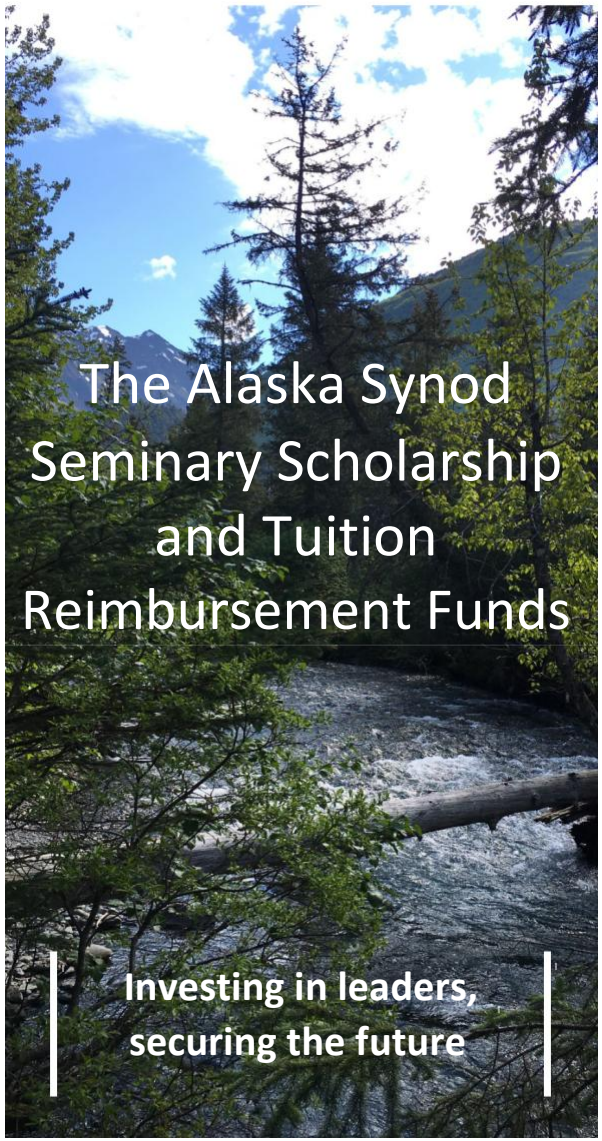

Alaska Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Two funds support leaders who come from and serve God's church in Alaska.

The Seminary Scholarship Fund supports educational costs of leaders from the Alaska Synod.

The Tuition Reimbursement Fund assists pastors serving in the Alaska Synod.

Seminary Scholarship Fund

The cost of seminary education can be a significant roadblock for those preparing for rostered ministry in the ELCA. **Alaskans have unique gifts to offer**, wherever they end up serving. Candidates from Alaska know the value of collaboration, diverse perspectives and navigating changing and complex realities. Your gift to this fund supports the education and development of Alaskan leaders as the prepare to minister in a complex and changing world.

Tuition Reimbursement Fund

Synods who recognize and address the burdens of seminary debt for first-call pastors attract more interest from seminary seniors. This fund assists pastors in paying seminary debt, so **leaders can focus on caring for the people of God and their neighbors**. Priority is given to those earning less than full-time compensation and/or below synod guidelines. Your gift to the seminary tuition reimbursement fund supports the work of pastors that in turn supports congregations and communities.

How to Give

Support the seminary scholarship or tuition reimbursement fund by a secure electronic gift through the synod website: https://www.elcaalaska.net/seminary-support-funds.html

You can make a one-time or recurring gift to either fund, or designate your gift as "where needed most." We can also accept legacy and estate gifts, as well as qualified-minimum disbursements from individual retirement accounts. Please contact the synod office at 907-272-8899 to discuss these options.

David Ingram, Fairbanks, is a seminary student through Wartburg Seminary's Collaborative Learning program. These students serve a congregation part-time while attending seminary online and participating in two-week long intensives per year at the seminary campus. Ingram serves Lord of Life, North Pole.

"I didn't answer the call from God until I was 40," Ingram said. His family is rooted in Fairbanks; moving, plus the cost of traditional seminary, made rostered ministry previously unattainable. The Collaborative Learning program, plus support from scholarships including the Alaska Synod Seminary Scholarship, made answering the call possible for Ingram.

"It's been so helpful to receive the synod seminary scholarship." Ingram said. "It's so much less stress." Ingram will serve Lord of Life for his four years of seminary and be available to answer God's call to ordained ministry – wherever it may be – upon his graduation.