

Lutheran Campus Ministry Twin Cities

SPRING 2019



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SPRINGTIME REFLECTIONS

As I remind myself, and each of you each year, late spring, which is almost always Easter in our liturgical life, mirrors the blessings we experience on campus as we close out the Spring Semester.

I recently came across another verse to Jesus Loves Me – here are the words:

Jesus loves me, this I'll sing.
He turns winter into spring.
Crocus breaking through the ground,
Once was lost but now am found.

Having walked through the darkness and brokenness of our own lives, and having walked through the stress of midterms, the mental health peak season in early March, the dark of winter. Winter turns into spring

New life breaks through the ground. Those who were lost now are found. Our students returned from Spring Break in Denver, animated by close encounters with the Holy, and inspired to put their faith in action. Staff continue to learn about the transformative impact LCM has on individual lives as we welcome leaders for the coming year.

Metro churches welcomed student preachers throughout the Minneapolis and St. Paul Area Synods for LCM Sunday, and both students and congregations got to experience what it is to be a part of the whole church.

And as the pastor of this transitional, ever dying, ever rising community, I get to be the proclaimer of good news that God is, indeed, at work on campus, turning winter into spring. I get to proclaim the counter cultural story that the church, isn't, in fact dead – but that God is at work, making something new, even if it might seem buried under inches of snow and ice. As I encounter students, and bear witness to their compassion, their courage, and their deep hunger for God, it is my great pleasure and call to share their stories with all of you – the people who make our work on campus possible.

You all, through your encouragement, prayers, and financial support, are co-workers in the Gospel with me, with our servant leaders, and our board of directors. You help us move beyond surviving to thriving! We are so grateful for you, and for the transformative, life giving, resurrected God we follow.

Pastor Kate

END OF THE YEAR CELEBRATION MAY 5, 2019

5:30 PM POTLUCK *(bring a dish to share)*
6:15 PM PROGRAM AND WORSHIP
GRACE UNIVERSITY
LUTHERAN CHURCH
ALL WELCOME!



Belonging is Blessing

LCM-TC's "Blessing Stones" ministry was born out of students' longing for a way to share moments on their faith journeys. A few times each semester, we take time during worship to connect our own stories to scripture and share those stories of God's in breaking love with one another - especially as they relate to moments of belonging, loss, hope, wrestling, becoming, healing, awe and more. We pray together, bless one another, and students are invited to take a stone that marks this moment on their journey. This fall, Dakota Noel, a senior, shared his story of "belonging" with the worship community grounded in the text for the day, 1 Corinthians 12:

I went to a parochial school up until 8th grade. So basically, I had been part of Christian community since I could be part of community, and it was fine, until it

wasn't. From grade 5 up I was bullied heavily. I was an outsider in a homogenous community...I was handicapped, I was different. It got so bad I was self-harming, and even made attempts on my own life. To me this was the hand saying, "I have no need of you," you are lesser, and don't belong. I internalized that, "Because I am not a hand I do not belong."

So, I left church. Or I thought I left, but that didn't make me any less a part of the body. I went to a public high school with no one from that old school. I think it's impossible at that age to separate your attackers from the context they exist in, so I didn't. I lost my attackers, but I also lost my faith. I was gone for 5 years, and in that time, I ran the gamut from spiritual but not religious to agnostic to Buddhist, sometimes keeping up pretense, other times not bothering at all. I was trying to figure out who I was spiritually and what I believed. By the end of this period, I was isolated, going through the motions of life, but not really experiencing it.

Then, almost out of nowhere, when in college I passed by Grace church, where LCM meets, and decided I should go to worship again. It was like being refilled. Everything culminated to bring me back. The service was a social and open dinner

church, people had recognized me in passing from other groups, and in a big way they saved me. They pulled me in and showed me what the true Body of Christ felt like and gave me a spiritual home again. They also gave me a social circle that stretched far outside the four walls of church. No other group I know exists in that way. I don't go to church with my dance friends, and certainly dance is a big part of my life. But I do dance with my church friends, we go to the cabaret or argue about the specificity of language or go hiking or play games. Truly, we are our whole selves with each other. We do not simply "fit in", we belong."

My story is a thank you to the community, past and present, all its parts. As much as it is my story, it's also a pouring out of the gratitude I feel so full of, for this space that put my feet back on the ground, and these people that taught me what it means to belong to the Body, and to belong in general. Thank you.



BELONGING STONE

May you always know God's love, mercy and forgiveness as the place where you are from, and to where you will return.

In times of loneliness and loss, celebration and struggle, may you, and all people, find a place to belong. May you know comfort and laughter, strength and good courage. Amen.



A Wide Welcome

Recently, LCM-TC completed a student driven process that makes explicit our welcome to the Queer community on campus and beyond. While we've maintained our "Reconciling" designation for decades, fresh and updated language in our statement of welcome was overdue. Our servant leaders and board of directors have adopted the following welcome statement:

We welcome all who are seeking God's love and grace. We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or relationship status. We welcome all without regard to addictions, physical or mental health, imprisonment, socio-economic circumstances, or anything that too often divides us. Our unity is in Christ

We acknowledge that we are on a journey towards understanding what it means to be an inclusive and welcoming community in a culture that is increasingly polarized and divided, one that can feel hostile towards difference. Lines of race, class, and geography are becoming difficult to transgress, especially as they take shape in our common political life. We are hopeful about what it means to simply be on the journey towards unity in Christ

Over the next year, we look forward to integrating the substance of our welcome statement into our leadership training, worship, and activities.

Third Annual LCM Sunday – A Success!



On Sunday March 31st, nine congregations across the metro opened their doors to host LCM-TC students as preachers. Our third annual LCM-TC Sunday is becoming a tradition with both congregations and student preachers excited to connect in this special way. Students worked with Barbara Lundblad, renowned preacher and LCM board member, to develop their sermons. LCM Sunday gives students an opportunity to explore preaching while sharing the LCM story. It is a great way for high schoolers to get an inside look into our ministry and allows us to invite broader support of our young adults from area congregations.

Study after study reveals that fewer young people are attending church, and of those that do attend, they attend less regularly. What these studies fail to account for is the deep faithfulness of the students who are actively engaged with a faith community, the ways they are reaching out across borders and boundaries, the counter cultural nature of their practice, the ways they're integrating their experiences in labs and classrooms with their faith, and the ways they are, and will continue, to shape the church and world into the future.

We extend a big thank you to the following student preachers and the congregations where they preached: Dakota Noel at Grace University Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, Nick Foreman at Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church in St Paul, Grace Richmond at House of Hope Lutheran Church in New Hope, Mara Bowman at Shepherd of the Hills, Connor Fell at St James in Burnsville, James Dahlvang at St Michael's Lutheran Church in Roseville, Jonah Snyder at St Timothy

Lutheran Church in St Paul, Olivia Olson at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church in St Paul, and Caleb Meyer at University Lutheran Church of Hope in Minneapolis. A team of board members, current students and alumni accompanied the preachers to hold adult forums and connected with members in the congregations. Thanks to: Sarah Baker, Jon Buuck, Nate Crary, Terri Endress, David Fuerst, Dan Olson, Emma Sands, Tim Schroeder, Annelisa Steeber, Brian Swanson, Megan Thrasher, Libby Witte and to all the pastors and organizers of the nine congregations.

If your congregation would like to host an LCM Sunday please contact Pastor Kate at kate@umnlutheran.org.

Thrivent Members Make a Difference!

We're excited to share that in 2018 based on member recommendations (that's you!), **Lutheran Campus Ministry-Twin Cities received \$1,054 in charitable funding!** The Thrivent Choice program helps members make a positive impact in their communities. If you are a Thrivent Member, please consider designating LCM-TC to receive Thrivent Choice dollars.



Happening Huddles

"LCM Huddles" are small groups of 4-6 students, most of them student led, where theological concepts like light, repentance and freedom are explored as ways to see God showing up in their lives and in the world. Together, students discern how to put these concepts into action, or to participate in "agape," in the world.



One huddle brought light to people's lives, by decorating rocks with uplifting notes, and left them around campus, the city, and the country for people to find.



Another huddle explored light by taking a yoga class.



This huddle explored hula hooping while on roller skates – just another expression of God's love – fun, laughter and joy!

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November 6, 2018 – March 29, 2019

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We are grateful to the following individuals, organizations, and businesses for their gracious support of Lutheran Campus Ministry – Twin Cities.
We apologize for any errors or omissions that may have inadvertently occurred. Please report them by emailing info@umnlutheran.org.

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LCM Bible Studies – A Place to Explore Curiosity

LCM Bible Studies are one of the cornerstones of our ministry on campus. Each week small groups meet in coffee shops and around campus to study scripture, ask big questions and explore their faith and life. Nick Foreman, a sophomore, shares his experience in one of our bible studies and his life as a student as they reflected on Matthew 6:25-29, 34

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life...

As a student, my life is surrounded by uncertainty. What classes should I take? What should I major in? Is my GPA high enough? Are there enough flashy things on my resume?

Am I involved with enough research? There's an increasing pressure to have my life figured out. We are all faced with a myriad of decisions, and there's no way we can possibly have answers to all of them. Fortunately, we are not alone. God is present in my uncertainty, and I know He is present in yours as well.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus speaks of the peace that God can provide in spite of anxiety. Because of the grace of God, the birds in the air are fed, without concern for the harvest or a roof over their heads. Now this doesn't mean that no one needs to work or eat or purchase clothing, because that would be impractical. Instead, Jesus is using the analogy to drive home the point that even in the unknown, in times of anxiety or uncertainty, God is there to meet and reassure us. Our troubles for today are plenty without worrying about the troubles of tomorrow.

I attend a weekly LCM Bible study on the St. Paul campus, and our conversations tie in well with the passage from Matthew. We've wrestled with topics like the fear of a benevolent God, "should statements" from the church, and God's presence in our

differences. Our group tackles these questions with earnest each week, but we usually don't come to a definitive answer. I always walk out of the coffee shop with far more questions than I have answers. But week after week, I also walk out feeling satisfied. This satisfaction surprised me – as a scientist, I enjoy numbers, data, graphs, and conclusions – all definitive, certain things. How could I walk out with more questions but feel more at ease? Ultimately, I realized that God is just as present in that unknown as He is in the certitude.

God's presence in that uncertainty ties in well with faith – a confidence despite a lack of clarity. It's the idea that God can support and comfort and protect, even though you have no way of knowing for sure that He's there. In distance running, the best way to run faster is to be reasonably uncomfortable – eventually, your body adapts and grows. Understanding God and our faith is no different – it takes time, energy, thought, and difficult questions. Embrace those tough questions. Know that you will never have all of the answers and be at ease knowing God doesn't expect you to know them all.



Emerging Adults and the Church of the 21st Century

On February 7th, LCM-TC gathered 35 congregational leaders and youth workers to hear from Professor Roland Martinson and Pastor Kate Reuer Welton about a

research project about the spirituality of young adults on college campuses, as known through Lutheran Campus Ministries nationwide. The research included an exhaustive literature review, site surveys and input by over 800 college students. At its heart, it aims to provide an overview of both the cultural realities of life on college campuses, as well as provide best practices for engaging with 18-24 year olds.

To read the study in its entirety please visit <https://lumin-network.com/literature-research/>



As part of our Faith and Leadership series, LCM-TC hosted Austen Hartke, author of *Transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians* for a conversation about gender diversity in Christian communities. Austen shared his story about growing up as a bisexual, transgender person of faith. As a transgender person of faith, Austen's greatest passion is helping other trans and gender-non-conforming people see themselves in scripture. A nice mixture of students attended from LCM-TC, Hillel, the Wesley Foundation, as well as religiously unaffiliated students from the Queer community.



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Reflections on Alternative Spring Break Service Trip – by Nate Crary

During spring break, I ventured west to Denver, CO in a big van with 11 of our brave students and Bergen Nelson, our incredible resident seminarian/LCM intern. Together, we took the chance to get away from life on campus and learn about the increasing challenges in housing security that individuals from all walks of life encounter in Denver -- a city that does a really good job of presenting itself as forward-thinking, welcoming, and aesthetically pleasing.

Our schedule was filled to the brim with volunteer opportunities at a variety of service organizations whose work it is to meet the wide range of needs a person experiencing homelessness might have. One

organization located in an industrial park near Mile High Stadium, EarthLinks, is an urban gardening center that teaches its participants gardening skills while providing opportunities to sell handmade products like earth-friendly soaps and honey. They invite individuals to step out of the isolation that people experiencing homelessness often face, to step into a community, restoring relationships between people and with the earth.

At the end of a very full week (including taking in the sunrise over Red Rocks Amphitheater) this question was asked of us during a final walking tour through downtown Denver: "Who are cities for?" It was clear to me after walking only a few blocks, once my eyes were made to focus on things I am privileged enough to never really *have to* notice, that cities are not for everyone. They are especially not for those who do not have a safety net of support within their community to fall back on when the unexpected (broken or abusive relationships, changes in mental or physical health, job loss) inevitably happens. It seems when you find yourself all alone, cities like Denver are quick to leave you behind.

It was an honor to watch our students be deeply impacted by all of the new information they were absorbing and to see each person on the trip be changed by their relationships with one another and with the good people we met while in Denver. I was so inspired by and give thanks to God for the organizations and the people who refuse to let those experiencing homelessness go unnoticed.

Want to support our mission to broaden and deepen our work? Please consider a three-year commitment to support our presence *On the Campus for Good*. To learn how please visit our website at www.umnlutheran.org/support.