

## Tailgate Tuesday Leads to a Baptism and Affirmation of Faith



Left: Owen gets baptized in Barton Creek as confirmand, Camila Ugaz looks on.

Right: "Let your light so shine before others..." Vicar Cecie gives Owen his baptismal candle.

- by OWEN POWELL, Junior, Environmental Engineering Major

One Tuesday this past October I walked past 21st & San Antonio with my favorite human, Camila. We couldn't help but notice a long line of students tracing down the block. I found out from one of my friends that there were people over there who gave out free food every week. My Tuesday evening class had been cancelled, so Camila and I immediately did exactly what every other Longhorn would do: we got in line!

My first interactions upon receiving a burger were with the pastor and the vicar. Then we interacted with some other volunteers and students - all of whom, to my surprise, had huge smiles on their faces despite having to hand out what seemed like 100 burgers a second.

But it gets even better. I noticed from some signage that they were Lutheran. I promptly recalled my times going to a Lutheran church when I was little. Something stirred up inside me quite out of my control and I couldn't help but act. I scanned the QR code to get some more information about LuMin while I ate my burger (which was delicious by the way). Something was different about these people; they were onto something very good.

I grew up somewhat Lutheran, but I had never been baptized. Before moving to Texas I went to a Lutheran church in northern Michigan until I was about 5 years old. The pastor at the time took another call in Alaska; My family struggled to connect with the new pastor, so we stopped attending church and I lost touch.

When I was a sophomore at UT, I met Camila. We tried going to some churches on campus but struggled to find a place for us. Either we did not agree with their theology, or the community was subpar - sometimes it was both. Camila grew up in the Catholic church in Peru - because of her family's tradition - but she couldn't identify with the community. It wasn't until that wonderful Tailgate Tuesday - and the work of the Holy Spirit -

that we would encounter a Christian community we found compelling: A bunch of Lutherans joyfully serving! Together, Camila and I (re)discovered our faith. With the support of the LuMin community, I gradually felt called to be baptized, and Camila expressed her desire to affirm her faith in the Lutheran church.

We spent the following weeks having fellowship and catechism together with the whole community after service. We engaged in deep conversations about God and learned some Lutheran basics from fellow UT students and newfound friends.

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A bunch of Lutherans joyfully serving!"

We were able to also show our gratefulness to the LuMin community through arguably every Lutheran's favorite thing - food - and we cooked for them.

On Easter Sunday evening, I was baptized in Barton Springs; Camila affirmed her faith, and thus began a lifetime of serving God and others.

I will never swim in Barton Springs again without thinking about that special day. Camila and I will be forever grateful for all the wonderful things LuMin has done and continues to do for us, the community, and the Faith. Now, on any given Tuesday, you'll find Camila and I @ 2100 San Antonio "giving a flip," as Pr. Brad says. We get to experience the powerful impact our small LuMin community has both on the "40 Acres" and in our hearts.

## Worship Musician Intern Finds Belonging - Community

- by ELLIE SEIVERS - Junior, double major in Performing Arts/Radio, Television and Theater

In one of my classes this past semester, we discussed the question, "What is community?" After hearing others' perspectives and reflecting on my own experiences, I came up with this definition: A community is a group in which people find belonging and acceptance, connect with one another based on their unique life experiences, and mutually support one another, enabling them to grow as individuals and as a group.

LuMin embodies this meaning of community for me. Being multicultural - I'm half Japanese and half German-American - I have often had a hard time finding a community where I felt like I belonged and was fully accepted. Through this struggle, two sources of strength have always been with me: music and faith. Serving as the worship musician intern here at LuMin, I have had the wonderful privilege of sharing my music with others who share my Christian faith, while knowing that I am accepted and celebrated for the unique person that I am.

I'm so grateful to have found LuMin. The strong support network within this community has helped me grow in my self-understanding and confidence in serving others. Participating in and seeing the positive impact of LuMin's support of the broader UT community - from our weekly "Tailgate Tuesdays" to raising funds for the University Leadership Initiative - has cemented for me just how special a community LuMin is.



In 2021, during my first semester at UT in person, I didn't make time to participate in campus ministry as I focused on the challenges of new courses and living on my own for the first time, miles away from my family and friends. It was only after I returned home for winter break and attended my home church in Canada (I'm a life-long Lutheran) that I realized just how much I missed Christian fellowship.

So when I returned to school in the spring, I contacted Pastor Brad and joined LuMin. A year and a half later, I'm more grateful than ever for the community I've found in LuMin. I'm reminded of my confirmation verse,

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1 Peter 4:10 – “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” It’s wonderful to participate in LuMin’s ministry by sharing the gift of music that God has given me, and wonderful to have found a true home with my LuMin faith family.

## Thinking More Deeply About Faith

- by SHANNON PERRY,  
Junior History Major

In my fourth semester serving as LuMin’s Evangelism and Outreach Intern, I’ve been thinking more deeply about my faith. Interfaith conversations, celebrating a baptism and confirmation in our community, engaging in new and deeper relationships - all have had a profound effect on me and all who are involved LuMin.

This past April, the University Interfaith Council (UIC) returned to hosting the UT president, Jay Hartzell for a breakfast with representatives from each UIC campus ministry. My fellow “LuMinator,” Virginia Vanicek (freshman) and I were grateful to attend. We spoke to Mormon, Jewish, Methodist, Catholic, and Hindu students over issues of social justice and the future of UT. Despite our differences in belief systems, this breakfast solidified my belief in the importance of open dialogue and finding grace in spaces of difference and diversity.

I also recently spoke on a panel for the Texas Association of School Boards along with other Jewish and Muslim UT students to discuss how we practiced our faith in Texas public schools. Hearing their stories made me realize the privilege of being Christian in high school in the South.

I was a member of Fellowship of Christian Athletes, my choir concerts were held in churches, and most of my friends were fellow Christians, among many other examples of me publicly living out my faith as a teenager. This was not a shared experience among the other students. Realizing this has filled me with a greater sense of purpose to steward my role as the Evangelism and Outreach intern to connect with those of other faiths and discern how to best go about in relationships with these other religious groups.

Speaking of relationships - this semester saw many connections among LuMinators that have been missing due to the pandemic. We welcomed Owen as a baptized child of God and Camila as she affirmed her faith. Through my role, I have engaged in one-on-one coffee dates, walks, and performances with members of our community. Forming strong interpersonal relationships among our LuMin community has encouraged a sense of talkativeness and trust both before and after worship. It’s been very fulfilling for me to witness a sense of community building within LuMin’s space, and I cannot wait to see how it will grow in 2023-24!



LuMin’s 2023 Year-End Boat Cruise entourage: dinner by Hula Hut, worship, a blessing of our seniors, a farewell and Godspeed to our vicar, and a mid-cruise disembark-embarkment (due to an engine failure on our first boat) made this LuMin boat cruise unforgettable!



Camila and Owen are LuMin’s newest (and gifted) communion bread bakers.



Pr. Brad spazzing out to be serving a Tailgate Tuesday with the ENTIRE Barlow family: (l-r) Jack, Paul, Claudia, and Bailey



Vicar Cecie and Maggie Shen are having just a bit too much fun working with the salsa.

## Deepened Community Life

by VICAR CECIE SUKNAIC SAULNIER, 2022-23 LuMin Seminary Intern

Imagine with me – 5 students, a campus pastor, and a vicar standing around a table, oven mitts passing back and forth from our hands as we unroll a giant ball of saran wrap with prizes inside. Frustration mounts as the small oven mitts are difficult to fit into some folks’ hands, laughter erupts when the mitts are thrown across the room instead of handed over peacefully, prizes fly out of the ball as it is pulled apart saran-wrap piece by saran-wrap piece. This is night one of the January retreat at Camp Chrysalis on Sabbath & Rest, where we explored rest through play.

This spring as I am closing out my time with LuMin, I look back on memories like the saran wrap ball game with a full heart and maybe a pinch of sadness. Another semester has come and gone, where we have worshipped, served burgers and tacos, and connected through fellowship at 2100 San Antonio. These past few months I have seen God’s presence through LuMin in ways both large and small, but the ones I want to share are like the saran wrap ball game – cherished memories that deepened community life. As odd as it may seem, playing board games together and fighting our hands into oven mitts to unwrap prizes deepened the community that retreated together in January.

The laughter we shared, the silliness that was fostered, and the good-natured rivalries that came about helped us connect. The first night of the retreat laid the groundwork for vulnerable and profound reflections over the next few days. Through play and fun, our connections deepened.

During the season of Lent, we took up the practice of worshiping around the cross on Sunday evenings. Designed from Holden Village’s Prayer Around the Cross liturgies, we spent time in silent and sung prayer, reflection and contemplation on scripture, and physically on the floor lighting candles around the cross. From my vantage point one evening, I could see outside our space to the street beyond where countless students streamed pass on their way home or to campus. Cars drove by, sometimes construction work was ongoing, the world continued to be busy outside. And yet, inside we were still. It felt like holy ground to me. Those Sunday evenings around the cross deepened our community, leading to vulnerable conversations over simple meals afterwards. As we end our time together for this academic year, bless our seniors, and send me along my way, we do so with a community whose well runs deep. For this, I give thanks to God.