

Lutherans and Methodists and Episcopalians, Oh My!



ALL Saints Holding All Things In Common

- by **ISABELLA GARCIA** - Sophomore, Kacie Brekhus Community Life Intern, majoring in Textiles and Apparel

This past All Saints Day, LuMin had the opportunity to worship and commune with our ecumenical campus ministry partners here at the University of Texas. What was dubbed to me as “dinner church” proved to be so much more than just a Sunday night dinner and liturgy.

Joined by the Episcopal Student Center, UKirk, Labyrinth, Wesley, and the University Methodist Center we gathered on that All Saints Day around a candle. The light was passed from person to person and all together we sang ‘When the Saints Go Marching In’ as we processed into the joint worship and dining room.

That moment was so profound for me. Here I was, with students and ministers I had never met before, yet I felt so connected and intertwined with them. Gathered in candlelight and song, I felt denominational barriers fall and a sense of community rise.

Once seated at our tables, again surrounded by unfamiliar faces, we dined on tamales and beans and shared the customary introductions of name, year, and major around the table. I met students from the various campus ministries as well as one of the pastors at UKirk, Carter Grant. During worship we heard readings and were given the opportunity to discuss them at our tables. I felt so

inspired by the words and takeaways from the students around me. Even though the message was the same, each person took away something different in value.

I found this night to be one of the most impactful nights in my semester. Gathering around food and Word with community was something not only I needed, but I’m sure is what other students needed as well.

“Here I was, with students and ministers I had never met before, yet I felt so connected and intertwined with them.”

This experience reminded me of an image of the early church from Acts 2, “And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

God calls us, the church, to be a fruitful community - a life-giving community. Though separated by majors, years, or campus ministries, we are all one in the body of Christ. As we commune and break bread together, we trust that God will reveal God’s power to others and welcome them into this community as well.

Donor Gratitude: Sharing Love and Light

by **CORRIE JARRETT** - Sophomore, Bohls Donor Care Intern, majoring in Exercise Science

For me, LuMin is a place of love and light for college students. This is what keeps me involved and appreciative of our community.

We get to join in worship, converse at bible study, share incredible meals, celebrate at socials, give through volunteering, and create a sense of belonging for all who we encounter. LuMin’s love

and light are not only for students, though; we want our donors, alumni, fellow campus ministries, and supportive congregations to experience that same love and light!

I saw this sharing of love and light begin to happen this semester through our donor care notes. Writing letters of gratitude (*continued on P. 2*)

LuMin Intern Leads Bible Study

- by **JOSH ALLEN** - Senior, Kacie Brekhus Community Life Intern, majoring in Radio, Theater, and Film

As one of the Kacie Brekhus Community Life interns, I have to say: I love this LuMin Community I serve. I also very much like the Bible! These two passions are what led me to begin a LuMin Bible Study this past semester.

After talking with Pastor Brad and the students in LuMin, we chose to study the Bible’s “short stories” (any book with 1–2 chapters). This format made each conversation self-contained, so anyone could jump in any Friday night they were free.

My goal was to explore why each book was canonized and how it reflects God’s steadfast love. These books (like Obadiah’s prophecy or Paul’s letter to Philemon) weren’t grand sermons but intimate vignettes into early believers’ lives. They invite us to empathize with ancient peoples as they faced challenges while God worked to build their faith and guide them through a complex world.

Our Friday night studies sparked great conversations. By presenting these short stories as the words of fellow believers, I saw students step into the writers’ shoes, seeing how God moved in their lives and continues to work today.

Coordinating this study with the campus pastor also grew my faith. Learning the full context of these lesser-known stories greatly improved my scriptural literacy, to say the least.

The experience made scripture feel more alive. Showing how God navigated small, personal struggles back then gave me comfort that He continues and will continue to show up for us now.



...a Pokémon Conservationist, too! Like, one who’s gone viral! Seek him out on Instagram: “the_pokemon_conservationist”

Donor Gratitude

continued...

to our donors and involving my fellow LuMin students in this practice has been fulfilling or all of us.

Each letter written by a student introduces them to a specific donor, highlights their experiences at LuMin or school, and thanks the donor for their generous support. LuMin would not be a place of love and light without the support of our donors.

Expressing gratitude and care to our donors has not only allowed us to shine light on their generosity, but also cultivate a sense of connection and togetherness among our student worship community. We often write these letters as we share a post-worship meal together. I have seen how gratitude expressed is a shared experience that uplifts not just those on the receiving end, but all involved.

My experience as LuMin's first Bohls Donor Care Intern has shown me that any giving rooted in love flourishes when celebrated. I had no idea how much community and support stemmed from our campus ministry until I served as our Donor Care intern.

I look forward to future ways that LuMin students can connect with donors - perhaps through worship or other social gatherings. Gratitude flows in both directions. I get excited for how one-on-one conversations between students and donors would magnify God's love and light experience here at LuMin.

Planning Worship Grows Faith

- by **ELLIE SEIVERS** - Senior, Music Intern, majoring in Violin Performance.

Serving as LuMin's worship musician has invited me to more deeply consider on how each liturgical season can serve to form our faith.

This present season of Advent, for instance, is a time for introspection as we prepare our hearts and lives for the coming of Jesus.

So, for Advent I worked with Pr. Brad to move our worship to the more relaxed setting of the front lounge with simple, repetitive, easy-to-sing melodies from the Taizé Community - music that encourages less attention on the music and more contemplation of the text through the ancient practice of Lectio Divina.

Sacred and secular observations, like Hispanic Heritage Month, have blessed us with the opportunity to make use of a Spanish-based liturgy and for me to provide special music by Mexican composer, Manuel Ponce,

As I have reflected each week on the readings to select the hymns, I've felt my faith deepen; I'm grateful for how God has enhanced my theological understanding in the process. This semester has had its ups and downs, yet in the midst of this I - and the fellow students I serve - have been reminded of God's presence through it all.

I'm grateful to have had the experience of regularly reflecting on God's Word through my role in worship planning. It is what has kept me grounded in my faith, hope... and God's love.

Flourishing Amid Growing Need

Reflections from our Food Pantry Intern

- by **JODIE NGYUYEN** - Senior, Loren & Kay Jensen Daily Bread Intern, majoring in Computational Biology

During my time as an intern at the food pantry, I've had the privilege of seeing it grow and evolve to meet the needs of our student community. Initially, the pantry operated with a simple principle: take what you need, no questions asked, and no limitations. This approach allowed us to offer support to students facing food insecurity without barriers, making it a safe and welcoming place for all.

However, as the demand for services has increased, we've encountered new challenges. More students are relying on the pantry, and while it's been a blessing to be able to help so many, we've had to adapt our approach to ensure that all students have access to what they need.

We've implemented some necessary changes, including limiting the amount of food each student can take. These measures are not about restricting generosity but ensuring that we can serve everyone who comes to us.



This shift has underscored an important lesson about the nature of service: generosity requires thoughtful planning and balance. It's not just about offering help without limit, but about making sure that resources are distributed equitably so that no one goes without. Basically, we're called to be careful stewards of that which has been entrusted to us.

It's a reminder that, as our community grows, we must remain adaptable, making adjustments that allow us to meet the increasing need while still upholding our mission of providing access to food and essential items for every student who seeks support.

LuMin on a Justice Walk with ADPAC



- by **VIRGINIA VANICEK** - Junior, Carl & Claudia Tienert Social Justice Intern, majoring in Astronomy & Physics

The Asian Desi Pacific Islander American Collective (ADPAC), like most other Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) specific student groups at UT, has struggled after the passing of the Senate Bill 17 this past year.

As LuMin's Teinert Intern for Social Justice, ADPAC's struggles have presented LuMin an opportunity to live into our identity as a Reconciling in Christ worship community - once which seeks to walk alongside groups who have historically been ignored or ostracized from the church.

While ADPAC has not closed (like the Gender & Sexuality Center previously reported *The Times*, Spring Issue) ADPAC was originally a part of the university. Now they struggle to exist only as a student-run organization. ADPAC no longer have the funding, staff support, or physical space at UT they were previously provided by the University.

LuMin's worship community has designated

ADPAC to be the recipient of our Sunday offering for this school year. Our prayer is that our contribution will help continue services they've had to dissolve or cut back on for the students they serve.

We've also offered our space to ADPAC for meetings if they are not able to gain access to a space on campus. In addition to coming alongside ADPAC through monetary efforts, meeting space, and future volunteering, I've personally been blessed to begin a friendship with Aneesha Kandikonda, one of the leaders of ADPAC and we have hosted her at LuMin to share more about ADPAC and how our benevolence will go to good use.

Aneesha has been an absolute joy to work with; I've been inspired by her unwavering hope. Talking with her always reminds me that while there are many injustices in the world, quitting is not the answer. Working to continue to support and love those who are struggling is our only way forward as we seek to be Christ's followers.