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Reformation Sunday is Confirmation Sunday @ LuMin!



Blessed by the tie that binds! Two students - Jimmy O'Brian and Ariana Solis, affirm their faith on LuMin's Confirmation/Reformation Sunday. Red ribbon was used in place of the laying on of hands.

A Faith Reformed

- by **JIMMY O'BRIEN**, Freshman

I've never been a person to whom faith comes easily. I've been taught throughout my life to question everything and believe only in what you yourself can see. As such, my relationship with Christ and the Lutheran Church has been rather difficult.

I was never confirmed at my home congregation, because they preached a brand of Lutheranism that went against my core beliefs and that felt like the end of my relationship with God. I went as far as to consider myself an agnostic for a number of years, I truly never expected to be a person of faith again.

But then college rolled around. The youth group leader from my congregation was kind enough to refer me to LuMin, through the scholarship program for incoming freshmen, like myself.

In all honesty, I never expected to be a

regular member of the ministry. But when I went to the first service, I realized that this was a different way of approaching the same system of beliefs, one that I could identify with and apply to myself and my actions in meaningful ways. Through LuMin, I could worship in a manner that made me feel fulfilled and didn't force me to compromise who I am to fit into a congregation.

And, after years of disconnection with the church, I finally got confirmed. I went to a series of confirmation classes via Zoom over the course of the semester, and I got to take part in a confirmation rite through this worship community that has shown time and time again that it cares about me, just like every other member and every other student on campus.

I'm proud to call myself a Lutheran, and I have to thank Pastor Brad and my fellow congregation members for bringing me back home.

LuMin's Bridge Building Continues!

- by **MAGDALENA SHEN**, Sophomore -
LuMin Building Bridges Intern



Magdalena Shen, Jimmy's confirmation sponsor, assisting him with his red carnation before worship.

Over the past 4 months, I have served as LuMin's Building Bridges Intern, a position for the sole purpose of walking alongside marginalized groups at the University of Texas at Austin.

Serving LuMin in this capacity has been one of the most fulfilling experiences for my soul this year. Many human rights issues have come into the spotlight this year, and many UT students find themselves away from the comfort of their homes in an environment that may or may not support them and their identity. However, here at LuMin Austin, we see this as a calling to serve and love one another.

For the second year in a row, LuMin has partnered with the UT Gender & Sexuality Center. LuMin students donated clothes to the GSC's Gender Neutral Clothes Swap
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A Faith Released

by **ARIANNA SOLIS**, Junior -
Kacie Brekhus Outreach Intern

Growing up, religion was not a big part my life. My family would go to church, but when we couldn't attend, we were made to feel like outcasts. Faith was a difficult thing for me complicated even more so by the incarceration of my father.

The church taught me that criminals are only bad guys, with bad intentions, punishable for doing bad things. Never was I told about the good guys who sometimes do bad things with good intentions.

My father understood his family was in dire need of support; as a quick and desperate solution, he turned to selling drugs. I refused to see my father as a "bad guy." He was my hero. He put food on the table, bought us clothes, and kept a roof over our heads.

When he had gotten arrested, it emotionally and financially devastated my family. Unable to afford a good attorney, our father received a court-appointed one who didn't care. Who hardly argued my father's case. In his eyes, my father's case was shut before it was even opened. Our family was devastated: This was my father's first offense selling marijuana with hopes of supporting his four kids. He received a 16 yr. sentence with a chance for parole in 4.

With my father absent and my mother sick, I worked hard to help support our family. My senior year, mom nearly lost her life. I was sure God was the one causing all the suffering my family and I were experiencing. My faith in God evaporated.

Here at UT, it only got worse. I struggled with depression. I was at the brink of leaving. The stress of being a first-generation and not being able to support my family brought me to the lowest moment of my young life.

That's when my friend Rachel, a student leader involved in LuMin, asked me if I'd want to attend a LuMin worship service. I said sure, and I was blown away. At that first worship service, I was met with open arms of acceptance. I met Pastor Brad and Rebecca. They helped me through my journey of depression. I'll never forget when Pastor Brad told me: God wasn't the one bringing me down! God's the one who was helping me get through the struggles. From then on, I worked to restore my faith. I continued to attend LuMin worship and bible studies and LuMin enlightened me to God's love and grace.

This past August, after such a long time of hardship for my family, received some great news! My father was being released on parole from prison - thanks to the prayers of my LuMin community and Pastor Brad's letter of recommendation! My father is now reunited with his family and can finally be a part of his children's accomplishments. For the first time in a long time, I am truly happy. Much of that has to do with having the God I've encountered through LuMin in my life.

All of this is why I affirmed my faith this past Reformation Sunday. I have come to know I will never be alone. I trust, by God's Grace, I will forever have a family and this God in my life.



Arianna with Pr. Brad visiting Shepherd of the Hills.

LuMin Bridge Building

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Swap this fall. We also held a Sunday worship following the Transgender Day of Remembrance. For that service of remembrance, I created a banner with names of Trans folk that have died in the past year – fully knowing: many more people lose their lives without being recognized for their identity. Our student worship community collected \$660 in the offering plate that Sunday, all of which will be given to the GSC's Crisis Fund. This fund is for students served by the GSC to cover a multitude of situations. For example, this money could be used to supplement rent for queer students outed to their families, pay for a name change, or provide long-term therapy that otherwise would be unavailable.

Other highlights of my semester have been the fundraising for the University Leadership Initiative Scholarships, which will provide five \$1000 scholarships to undocumented and DACA recipient students, and collaborating with the Voices Against Violence organization for a workshop detailing how to support a survivor next semester.



A note from Pastor Bread...er, Brad

Every Tuesday during the semester, I send out a 2 minute devo to our students along with the week's events. The following devotion was posted September 17th:

"Perhaps you've noticed: the LuMin campus pastor is, like...a walking pandemic sourdough meme!

Yep. I must admit it. I bake bread. I love doing it, AND it's also become a spiritual discipline.

I began baking bread well before Covid. Some of you know: LuMin students began our food pantry by students for students called "Daily Bread." I began baking bread because I thought it'd be cool to offer fresh baked bread as an expression of God's love for hungry college students.

Still, bread baking has taken on deep meaning for (would-be) home bakers. Emily VanDerWerff, Vox culture critic, writes, 'Bread baking is a thing we do in crisis, perhaps because bread is

Daily Bread Intern Rises to the Challenge



by ZACH BRUSEWITZ, Senior - Daily Bread Intern & LuMin V. President

It was not long after the outbreak of COVID and the world seeming to stop that I was asked by Pastor Brad to take over the role of running Daily Bread food pantry. Having been a volunteer with the pantry for the last year I was excited to take over the role, but also met with the challenge of adapting the pantry to the new norms of social distancing and contactless pickup.

Fortunately, I was aided by my predecessor, Madison Brenner, who had established a pre-order system that was proving to be successful. I have continued using this system to serve the students who have remained in Austin.

it has been great to serve my fellow Longhorns in this

trying time. Rewarding too, is the experience of receiving pre-orders every Monday knowing that I'm engaged in a ministry that's working to remove the stress that some experience when they wonder where their next meal is coming from. There's enough stress in college as is, and with a pandemic added to the mix no one should have to worry about getting groceries for the week.

There's enough stress in college as is, and with a pandemic added to the mix no one should have to worry about getting groceries for the week.

Beyond Daily Bread, LuMin has been serving food to students on our new "Tailgate Tuesdays" which have taken place in lieu of our weekly Tuesday dinners. Every Tuesday Pastor Brad and Rebecca have been serving anywhere from 50 to just over 100 students. And in so doing, spreading LuMin's generous spirit one meal at a time. It's been both a challenging and exciting time serving the student body. The challenges - albeit difficult - have proven to be conquerable.

one of the foundations of civilization, and perhaps because it has been marketed to us as life-giving.'

I couldn't believe the rush on bread flour in the first weeks of social-distancing. And good luck finding any yeast. I wondered about all of this with my therapist - we both agreed: it might have something to do with finding something to have control over; maybe too, it provides those who bake with a sense of optimism. The anticipation that yeast will always remain yeast and will make this lil' sucker RiSE.

In our worship community, we often hear, sing, pray, and talk about a present and future hope. Even as bread baking focuses us in the here and now, it also orients us toward the future.

It comes into being through a transformative process of mixing, kneading, rising, forming and heating—and pulls us through time along with it...filled with hope for what it will become.

(Maybe this helps us hear Christ anew when he says to us, 'I am the bread of life.')

I bake bread every Sunday for Eucharist, every Monday to bring to Daily Bread, and several days during the week to randomly give to students I know and to our neighbors.

I've the stated goal expressed to several of our students of giving a loaf of bread to every UT student I know by name by the end of the school year. By my count, I have handed out 30 loaves of bread so far. I've a ways to go.

Bread baking HAS pulled me through these difficult days, and God is using this bread to spread comfort, hope love, and joy...even in the midst of a pandemic.



President's Corner

by ANNA BARDENHAGEN, Senior - LuMin President

Entering this school year, I – and many students I know - weren't sure what to expect. Everything we'd come to expect in college had changed. The school's plans - and subsequently, our plans changed weekly.

Throughout the summer, Pr. Brad, our LuMin student leaders, and I made a ministry plan for the school year. We worried, though, how those plans would actually pan out. Would students really "show up"?

Faced with so much uncertainty, we could only offer our best, then have faith that God would lead us in the direction we needed to go. Looking back on this semester, which is nearly over, I am proud to say that LuMin has adapted and risen above the challenges we have faced this semester.

LuMin has maintained and grown through our socially distanced and virtual weekly outdoor worship services - held, by the way, at the lovely St. Martin's worship park.

Our revamped grab-and-go Tailgate Tuesday dinners, created and served by Pr. Brad and Rebecca, have become an amazing opportunity to serve more than just our small community. Each week dozens of students in West Campus, many of whom had never previously heard of LuMin, are fed home-cooked meals, entirely for free.

...We could only offer our best, then have faith that God would lead us in the direction we needed to go...

We had a six-week virtual Confirmation 101 Class – two of our students affirmed their faith on Reformation Sunday.

We've had Zoom Bible studies, Spiritual-TEA, and we began small group meetings, all of which have helped us remain close to each other and to God this semester.

We still yearn for the day when we can resume our normal activities, but until then, we have found a way to adapt and thrive that will certainly change our perspectives on worship and community for years to come.