

LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO

As a supplement to the report of Lutheran Campus Ministry of Illinois, we write to provide further information about campus ministry's work and outcomes on our synod's territory. Each of the reports that follow has been written by the staff person for that particular ministry.

At **THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO**, known for its intellectual rigor, it's often said that students live only "from the neck up." But at Lutheran Campus Ministry we find that *incarnation* is at the heart of the Christian life. God became flesh, and so we are nourished each week by the sacrament. The Word became flesh, and so we believe that words have the power to change the world. God took on the weakness of the human condition, and so we know that when we suffer we are never alone. God entered into the messiness of the world, and so we have courage to ask the tough questions: about the Bible, about our human failures, about what it means to live as a Christian and seek justice, about our understandings (and misunderstandings) of God and each other. It's countercultural; it's transformative; it's grace.

Each Sunday after church, LCM students meet for lunch and conversation. Our topics of discussion vary: What does it mean to be a Lutheran? How does the ELCA suggest we respond to domestic poverty? What do we think about predestination? Who was Saint Perpetua? Draw God. Is there any good news in the book of Ecclesiastes? In all of these conversations, students pray and laugh and anticipate their return to the library for study—knowing that the Spirit will follow us out into the campus and the world.

Each Thursday evening, students gather for "Body & Soul"—where the dinner we share is a direct extension of the grace that feeds us in the Eucharist and our academic Bible study melds seamlessly into conversations about the meaning of faith and ethics. Body & Soul is important to students: the ritual of singing Holden Evening Prayer and sharing the sacrament; the walk through the narthex to the church kitchen each week to discover what kind of home-cooked meal awaits; the safety of asking tough questions about the Bible. Thus, I wasn't entirely surprised (although I was amused) when I recently overheard two students plotting a way to use laptops and an internet-based phone service to broadcast Body & Soul in real-time next year to Japan, where one of the students will be studying on an exchange program!

Through Lutheran Campus Ministry, students forge relationships with students of other denominations (through ecumenical worship services and service projects with our Episcopalian and Catholic friends); with students of other faiths (through interfaith campus events such as the Iftar during Ramadan); with faculty and staff (through the Science and Religion Discussion Group, which also bridges the University of Chicago with the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago); with the members of Augustana (who cook for us on Thursdays and invite us into Sunday worship); with the neighborhood (as we gather on Friday evenings to cook and serve gallons of hot chili to our hungry

