

Lutheran Campus Ministry at Denton
Academic Year 2019-2020

Lutheran Campus Ministry at Denton continues to serve the university communities of Texas Woman's University and University of North Texas, while being in pastoral transition. Pastor Celene Welch announced her retirement in January 2019 and retired effectively in May 2019. Pastor Jim Rowe began as interim pastor on June 1, 2019.

As in any pastoral transition, the ministry of LCM continued during the 2019-2020 academic year in much the same way as previous years. LCM continued to offer Thursday night meals and bible studies for students at 6:00 pm at the Denton Wesley Foundation on the UNT campus, participated in all summer 2019 student organization fairs for new students, served at the Empty Bowls Luncheon in Denton in October 2019, and hosted the annual LCM Trivia Challenge and Silent Auction at Briarwood Retreat Center in November 2019.

In addition, Pastor Jim and students offered ashes to go on the UNT campus for Ash Wednesday 2020. Pastor Jim attended the Region 4 Lutheran Campus Ministry retreat in February 2020. And LCM sponsored the annual #churchtoo conference at the Denton Wesley Foundation in February 2020 with Pastor Jim participating in a panel on toxic masculinity in the Church and preaching at the closing worship.

When Covid-19 closed down the UNT and TWU campuses in March 2020, our ministry moved online and has remained there ever since. Weekly dinner and bible studies morphed into weekly bible studies and support sessions that continued through June even though the school year ended in early May. And Pastor Jim sat down with students for virtual lunch dates.

As the 2020-2021 academic year approaches, LCM will continue to meet virtually each week as most of our returning students are taking only online classes and likely will not be on campus much at all. Our ability to reach out to new students is certainly hampered by Covid-19 restrictions, so we participating with other Texas Lutheran Campus Ministries to reach out to every ELCA congregation in Texas to get student referrals. If you are a student (or you know one) who attends TWU or UNT, please reach out to Pastor Jim. The advantage of this time is that we can connect with commuter or online students just as much as students who live here in Denton!

After hearing about increased food insecurity on the Denton campuses, Pastor Jim fundraised over \$1000 by participating in the Great Virtual Run Across Tennessee which involved running 1000 km during summer 2020. The funds raised will be split between the Denton Wesley Foundation food pantry and purchasing PPE for returning students.

For the 2020-2021 Academic Year, LCM currently have two fundraisers planned: North Texas Giving Day on September 17, and an Oktoberfest Themed Virtual Trivia Challenge and Silent Auction on October 24. We hope to hold the Mike Minard Memorial Golf Tournament in the spring of 2021, after we had to cancel the 2020 edition.

As LCM enters into the second year of our pastoral transition, we are forming a call committee, and continue to make ourselves (virtually at the moment) available to guest preach, lead adult forums, and meet with youth groups.

We are extremely grateful to the entire NTNL Synod for your prayers, to the Synod staff for their support during this transition and pandemic, and to the congregations and individuals who provided meals and financial support this past academic year especially (but not limited to!): Rev. Kris Totzke, Christ the Servant (Denton), Grace (Carrollton), Ascension (Garland), Gloria Dei (Garland), Bishop Eric Gronberg, Rejoice (McKinney), and Christ (Dallas).

Respectfully submitted,

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