



Campus Ministry Impact Report



ELCA Campus Ministry



2023 - 2024
Academic Year

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Welcome to the 2023-2024 Academic Year Impact Report for ELCA Campus Ministry. This year, our mission to transform the lives of college students and campus communities through God's abundant grace has impacted thousands of students all across the nation through 176 ELCA campus ministry agencies and cooperating congregations.

ELCA Campus Ministry is carried out through the collaborative efforts of many organizations and individuals: local campus ministry agencies, led by over 200 staff people, synod staff members and campus ministry committees, the Program Director for Campus Ministry and the Young Adult Communities team at churchwide, and the LuMin Network, the association of campus ministry practitioners.

This year, we reached several significant milestones, including:

- Updating the ELCA Campus Ministry Grant Process to utilize funds more strategically, build organizational capacity, provide more resources to agencies that support underrepresented students, and better leverage data and impact stories
- Introducing new strategic grants, which offer multi-year grant support to new campus ministry sites, sites in redevelopment, or sites with capacity-building projects such as hiring fundraising staff or begin part time campus ministers up to full time
- Launching the LuMinary, an online resource hub for campus ministry staff that provides access to interactive courses, templates, and curricula for student programming and organizational health

As you read through the following pages, we hope you are inspired by the stories of success and the tangible differences we have made together. Thank you for your continued support and dedication to ELCA Campus Ministry. Together, we are reaching students across the country with the transformative mercy of Christ.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Joshua Kestner &
Rev. Emily Klock Tveite



Rev. Joshua Kestner
President,
LuMin Network



Rev. Emily Klock Tveite
ELCA Program Director,
Campus Ministry

Campus Ministry by the Numbers

Each week during the academic year, more than

3300

students participate in ELCA Campus Ministry

Last year over **11,000** students came to events



On an average week, LuMin sites offer

199

small group bible studies or faith conversations

176 local campus ministry agencies

159

documented Ecumenical partnerships

More than **1,000**

students attended a Campus Ministry Retreat last year

25%

of ELCA campus ministries reported at least one student baptism last year

The data in this report comes from the ELCA Campus Ministry Annual Survey, conducted June-August 2024.

Of 176 organizations, 135 responded to the survey and shared extensive information on their ministry activities in the past year.

2024 - 2025

Campus Ministry Goals

ELCA Campus Ministry is carried out through a partnership between the LuMin Network (the professional association of ELCA Campus Pastors and Ministers), the Churchwide expression of the ELCA, 62 synods, and nearly 200 local agencies (nonprofit organizations and congregations). Together, we work to inspire, connect, and equip campus ministry organizations to better serve students.

The LuMin network has identified the following goals for the 2024-2025 school year:

1

Provide educational opportunities for campus ministry staff and boards to build fund-development programs.

Beginning in August 2024, over thirty campus ministry organizations will be participating in a 15-month cohort-based fund development education course. This course will cover donor communication, appeals, gratitude, events, and legacy giving. Participants will have access to 1:1 coaching with a Certified Fundraising Executive (CFRE).

2

Study the challenges that campus ministry organizations are experiencing with call processes and develop tools to aid ministries and synods.

Staff transitions are especially disruptive in campus ministries because there is high turnover in student participants and little institutional memory. In 2025, ELCA Campus Ministry plans to intentionally listen to synod staff and local boards about how we can best assist in staff transitions and create written materials to aid ministry sites.

3

Expand our online library of resources for campus ministry to include tools for campus ministry board members and synodical staff.

In summer 2024, the LuMin network launched the LuMinary, an online resource library for ELCA Campus Ministry staff. During the 2024-2025 school year, ELCA Campus Ministry plans to launch a similar resource library for synods and agency boards. The library will feature resources on board development, fundraising, caring for buildings, staff transitions, and more.

Campus Ministry Agencies

97

Campus ministries operating as independent nonprofits

31%

are ministries are ecumenical, carried out with one or more full-communion partners

4

Campus ministries are ELCA congregations made up primarily of students & young adults

28%

of campus ministries are programs within intergenerational congregations

NEW MINISTRIES OFFER BELONGING

“If you had asked me my junior year of college if I had ever thought of being a Lutheran pastor, I would have said, ‘absolutely not.’” recalls Mariah Mills. Mariah attended an ELCA college but was deeply involved in an evangelical campus ministry. Later on in her junior year, though, her involvement with that ministry was disrupted. Mariah began to have questions about faith, and at the same time, she witnessed another student leader in the ministry being excluded after coming out as queer. “This was when I knew in my gut that I didn’t belong in that ministry anymore. I resigned from all my leadership positions in the ministry and I was left feeling lost and wayward.”

Mariah went to the ELCA chaplain at her college and began to talk to him about her faith. “I felt like I had the space to ask questions without judgment or without the risk of being cast aside. I was listened to and I was cared for. After all the uncertainty and pain that came from leaving a faith community, I started to learn again what belonging feels like and who God had truly created me to be.”

Mariah went on to attend seminary and become an ELCA Pastor. Now, along with the congregation she serves, she is part of an Ecumenical cooperative ministry at Boise State University, led by Campus Pastor Hannah Andres. “Because of my own personal experience I am deeply passionate about every college campus having a faith community that is a place of safety, welcome, and affirmation for all students.” Sophia’s Table, the ministry she supports is new, but already experiencing growth. “This is a true testament to the hunger present among students and young adults for a space to belong, to ask questions, and to feel God’s love without any exception,” says Mariah. “I want to continue the legacy of making room for college students everywhere to have a place of grace, a place to belong.”



Rev. Mariah Mills, Boise, Idaho

HOW MANY ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIPS DO WE HAVE?



Campus Pastors & Ministers

GIFTED & CALLED BUT STRUGGLING WITH LIMITED RESOURCES

Campus Pastors and Ministers are called to demanding and multi-faceted work. They minister 1:1 with students, lead worship, bible studies, and other activities. They develop leaders, and perhaps most critically, they continually invite and engage new students in a ministry environment where at least one quarter of participants leave each year.

In addition to student-facing roles, many campus ministers are the primary caretakers of a non-profit organization. They work with a board of directors, run fundraising programs, and care for buildings and financial resources.

Despite the complexity of the work, only 37% of campus ministry agencies have full time campus ministry staff. The others have part time staff and/or staff carrying out multiple ministry roles. 5% of campus ministries have no paid staff at all. Of rostered leaders serving in campus ministry, nearly one third are paid below synod guidelines.

It's no surprise that Campus Ministry has experienced high staff turnover since Covid-19 hit in 2020. Nearly half of campus ministers were not serving in their current role at the beginning of the pandemic.

In spite of the challenges of our shared work, Campus Pastors love their work and believe that Campus Ministry has much to teach the rest of the church. Pastor Ethan Lowery, who serves University of Mary Washington in Virginia said, "Campus Ministry is hard and good and I wish the congregational pastors saw campus ministers as having something important and good to teach the rest of the church as we deal with aging congregations and decline."

49%

of primary staff have been serving in their role fewer than 5 years

85% 15%

of practitioners are rostered leaders in the ELCA or another denomination

of campus ministries served by lay leaders working closely with a rostered leader

37% 58%

of ministries have full time campus ministers

have staff in part time or shared roles

5% of ministries have no paid staff

21%

of Campus Ministers identify as LGBTQIA+



Student Participants & Programs

THE LUMIN FOUR CORE PRACTICES

ELCA Campus Ministries gather students around four core practices:

Building Community

LuMin Communities are places where students experience belonging and safety. Communal meals, fellowship events, and open study space invite students to connect and be nourished.

Deepening Faith

Worship and prayer are at the heart of ELCA Campus Ministry. Over two thirds of campus ministry agencies offer worship weekly or more during the academic term. Increasingly, LuMin communities are offering contemplative prayer practices as a means of fostering spiritual resilience and easing anxiety and stress.

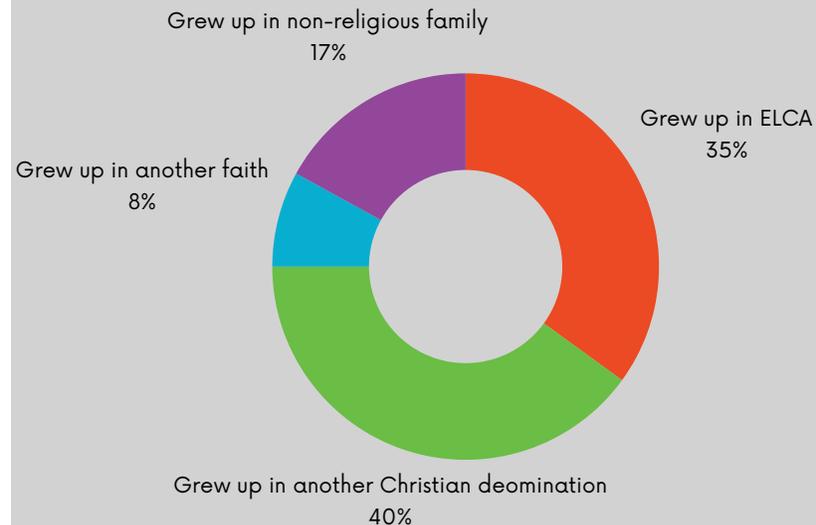
Expanding Minds

Nearly every Campus Ministry reported offering faith formation activities. Over 60% of campus ministries offered at least one small group weekly. 80% report offering Bible study in the past academic year and about half of sites offered studies on theological issues and social justice issues. About a quarter of LuMin communities offered faith formation activities for university faculty and staff.

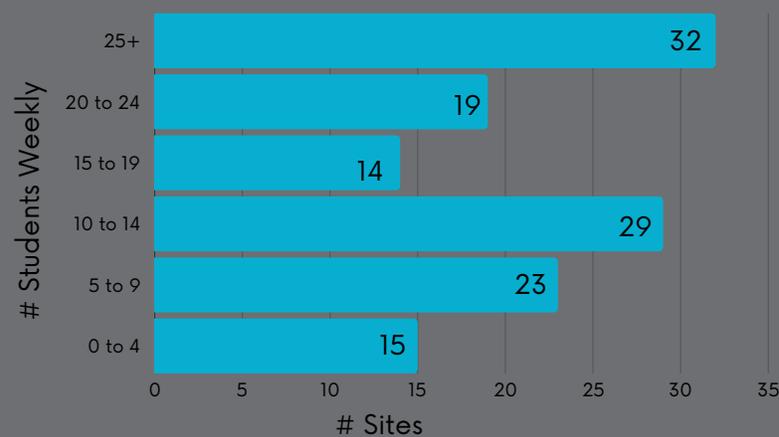
Inspiring Service

Campus ministry raises up leaders for the church and for the world. As young adults take on leadership in the day to day life of their campus ministry, they are also inspired to become leaders wherever life takes them next: congregations, volunteer service programs, ELCA Seminaries, and their local communities.

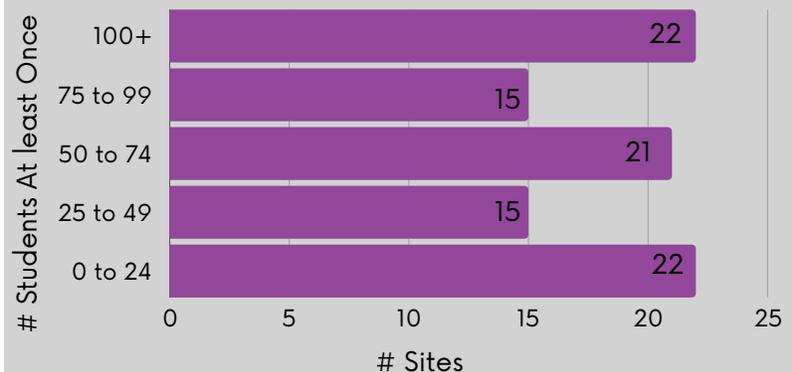
WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OF PARTICIPANTS?



HOW MANY STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN AN AVERAGE WEEK?



HOW MANY UNDERGRADUATES PARTICIPATED AT LEAST ONCE?



Student Participants & Programs



CORRIE'S STORY

When Corrie arrived at the University of Texas-Austin her freshman year, she became a piccolo playing member of the UT marching band. "As someone who'd been involved in marching band since high school," Corrie said, "you might easily assume I'd find my people there. But I needed more."

"My growing edge is being outgoing." Corrie found LuMin Austin and participated in a program called LuMin Lunches, where students are paired up 1:1 and get lunch close to campus on the ministry's dime. The lunches are intended to foster deeper relationships among students who often get lost in the crowd of a 50,000+ student campus.

After getting to know other students at lunch, she began to attend Sunday evening worship. "The students at LuMin are very welcoming people," Corrie reported. "I feel that same closeness when we gather around the table for communion. I am thankful every day to be a part of campus ministry."

This year, Corrie is serving as an intern for LuMin Austin. Her work is related to helping her peers connect with donors and alumni to express gratitude.

WORSHIP

About two thirds of campus ministries offer weekly worship for students during the academic year. Campus ministry worship includes elements found in all Christian worship including scripture, song, and holy communion. But campus pastors and ministers are also creative in connecting worship to daily life in a myriad of ways.

Rachel Young Binter, Campus Pastor at UW-Milwaukee shares that her students enjoy tactile rituals as a part of worship. "For example, I brought seed paper in the shape of hearts this year for Lent, and each week we wrote something on the paper we wanted to grow in ourselves, soaked the paper in the font as we remembered God's desire for our wholeness and blossoming, and then planted the paper in containers so that the new shoots greeted us on Easter."

Intercessory prayer is also a common element. At Luther House in Rapid City, SD, Rev. Carla Nelson shares that "there is a tradition of writing out prayer concerns on sticky notes and posting them. Each week, worship participants take a sticky note and pray that week for the special concern."

By facilitating meaningful worship experiences, campus ministers offer students a sense of respite and peace in the midst of their busy academic lives.

PASTORAL CARE

A ministry of presence and 1:1 care is an important part of campus ministry. The most common topics that staff report discussing with students are:

1. Anxiety and stress management
2. Theological questions
3. Vocational / career discernment
4. Issues with parents or family of origin
5. Spirituality and discipleship

Two thirds of pastors have pastoral care conversations with more than 5 students per week, with 15% of pastors reporting 10 or more weekly.

Student Participants & Programs

FAITH FORMATION

Campus Ministries offer many types of faith formation events. Some of the most common include (in decreasing order):

- Bible study
- Studies about social justice issues
- Studies about theology
- Studies about vocational discernment
- Book discussions
- Spiritual direction
- Studies about ecumenism / interfaith work
- Film screenings
- Studies for LGBTQIA+ Students
- Lecture series
- Small groups for newcomers / first year students
- Catechumenate programs

FOOD JUSTICE

LuMin sites are responding to the rise of food insecurity among college students.

26%

of ministries host a food pantry for students.

80%

of ministries host at least one meal per week for students who may or may not be involved in religious activities.



REENARD'S STORY

When Reenard came to the University of North Florida, he was experiencing something so many students go through. He was grappling with his faith. He had just left the church he grew up in because he disagreed with the values they taught.

“I left that church, and I wrestled with that because those were the people who raised me in my faith,” Reenard said. Like so many students entering college, Reenard felt disconnected from the congregation that had raised him, but also conflicted about how to move forward. He did not want to leave Christianity, but he needed to experience it differently.

“I wanted change in the church. I wanted to see the church grow. I love to share my ideas, but it’s hard to share your ideas when people don’t see things the same way you do. Sometimes you have to say, ‘Maybe this isn’t the place for me.’”

Reenard found Jacksonville Campus Ministry like many students do: at Market Days. He met Pastor Sarah Locke on a Wednesday morning, and she invited him to join the ministry at Food for Thought the next Tuesday. He has been attending ever since.

In JCM, Reenard found something he was searching for even before he left his previous congregation. “I just really enjoy the community aspect. People are very welcoming and I think that’s what I love about campus ministry: a sense of community and fellowship.”

More than that, though, Reenard has found the campus ministry is helping transform his own relationship with God, himself, and others. “I have a better understanding of who I am, my values, and what I stand for because of my involvement.”

Spotlight on Leadership Development

WHY DOES PEER MINISTRY MATTER?

Engaging students as peer ministers is vital to the campus ministry organization, to the students who serve, and to the greater church.

Fosters Culture of Invitation

Peer ministry helps to build an organizational culture that expects newcomers and is equipped to welcome those newcomers with generous hospitality. Peer ministers are equipped to invite, engage, and retain new participants. At ministry sites that have peer ministers and offer special training, 77% of campus pastors report student leaders who follow up 1:1 with newcomers.

Equips Students to Minister in Daily Life

When students become peer ministers in their campus ministry site, they learn skills for listening, reflection, and responding to others' needs that they can use beyond campus ministry. One student participant said, "I have very little time to fit in one more program, but wherever I am at, doing whatever I am doing, in any setting, I can listen and care for people."

Helps Leaders Go Deeper in Faith

Leadership groups help students who are more engaged in campus ministry and more mature in their faith development to go deeper. At Niner United in Charlotte, North Carolina, the student leaders cover a lot over the course of the year: "the art of hospitality, community building and belonging, speaking in public, talking to new students, making wise and ethical decisions, understanding key theological themes important to mainline traditions, conflict avoidance and management, empathetic practices, building spiritual disciplines, and caring for their own mental wellbeing."

Allows Students to Explore Vocation

In most campus ministries, students are equipped to explore their own interests and skills. At the Pace Center at Virginia Commonwealth University, "fellows receive training in Asset-Based Community Development practices and learn how to uplift the strengths of others. They work with interested students to develop ministries that bring those gifts to life, including mindful art projects, serving at food pantries, and a student-run weekly cafe."

"Leaders have the tools necessary to build community in their churches, volunteer settings, and workplaces after college."

~ Rev. Russ Kerr, Richmond, VA

60%

of campus ministries have identified student leaders or peer ministers

2/3

of those sites offer special training for peer leaders

34%

of campus ministries have hosted seminary field education or interns in past 5 years

75

known recent campus ministry graduates entering ELCA candidacy process

HOW THEY LEAD

We asked Campus Ministers how students are leading in their ministry sites. Here are common responses:

- Organizing events (72% of sites)
- Following up with newcomers (56% of sites)
- Leading worship (52% of sites)
- Cooking and serving food (51% of sites)
- Serving on the board of directors (51% of sites)

Governance & Strategic Direction

WHAT CHALLENGES DID CAMPUS MINISTRY FACE?

In our 2023-2024 staff survey, we asked campus pastors and ministers to reflect on challenges their ministry overcame this year. Some common themes included:

Staff Transitions

Several ministries experienced leadership changes with staff leaving or retiring. They navigated these transitions by relying on strong student leaders, board members, and congregational support to keep operations running smoothly.

Financial Resources

Financial constraints posed a major hurdle for numerous ministries. To address budget deficits and declining funding sources, they implemented fundraising campaigns and engaged boards in development efforts.

Building Community Post Pandemic

In the wake of COVID, rebuilding a sense of community proved difficult with many groups. Persistent outreach, creative programming, and fostering an inclusive environment gradually helped re-engage students.

In spite of obstacles, campus ministries demonstrated resilience and motivation. They provided pastoral care, hosted thought-provoking discussions, and served as safe spaces for students navigating complex issues on campus and in the world.

“A primary threat facing all campus ministries is sustainability in the midst of paradoxical communication that the ELCA wants to ‘grow younger and more diverse’ while reducing support for campus ministry.

Across the entire ELCA, campus ministry serves the most new, young, and diverse adults! Which message should they believe?”

~ A Campus Pastor in CA

92%

of ministry sites have an active board

64%

have a mission statement in widespread use

71%

rate their synodical support as excellent or good

42%

of boards adopted strategic goals in last 5 years



Students bid farewell to Pastor Mark Coulter, who retired from UNC Chapel Hill in spring 2024 after 25 years of campus ministry.

Budgets & Buildings - Ministry Resources

STEWARDING LIMITED RESOURCES

Campus Ministry organizations continue to adapt to decreasing institutional funding, with more income coming from individual donations, partner congregations, and grants. These sources require stakeholder engagement on the part of the campus pastor or minister. Campus ministers reported giving up to 40 presentations per year in congregations or at synod events to invite funding for their ministry. Despite these efforts, budgets remain small, with only 20% of ministries reporting a budget of \$150,000 or more.

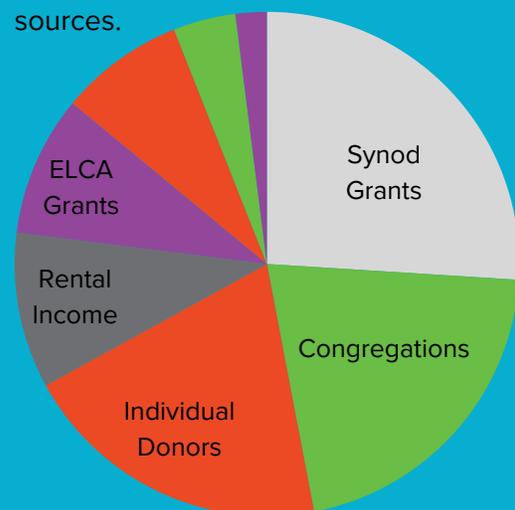
Land and buildings adjacent to university campuses are perhaps the most valuable resource being stewarded by campus ministry, but these buildings are aging. About a third are not ADA compliant or are unwelcoming in other ways. Some campus ministry organizations are looking to partner with housing developers to replace their aging buildings and obtain ministry space and, in some cases, monetary income through the sale or lease of their land.



Campus Pastor Jon Fry stands in front of St. Andrew's Lutheran Campus Center at University of Illinois, which was demolished this year. St. Andrew's is working with a local housing developer to replace their building with for-profit student housing that will also provide a new permanent home to the ministry at no cost.

OVERALL FUNDING SOURCES

Where does Campus Ministry funding come from? If all of the funds collected by individual sites were pooled into one budget, here is a snapshot of the sources.



- Synod Grants 26%
- Partner Congregations 21%
- Individual Donors 20%
- Rental Income 10%
- ELCA Grants 9%
- Ecumenical Partner Grants 8%
- Endowment Interest 4%
- Reserves 2%

STEWARDING BUILDINGS WITH NLCM, INC.

National Lutheran Campus Ministry, Incorporated is an independent organization that offers matching grants for Campus Ministry facility improvements and emergency grants for sites with critical needs. In the last 5 years, NLCM supported 34 campus ministry organizations with over \$750,000 in grants for building repairs and improvements.

71

campus ministry organizations own or co-own their buildings

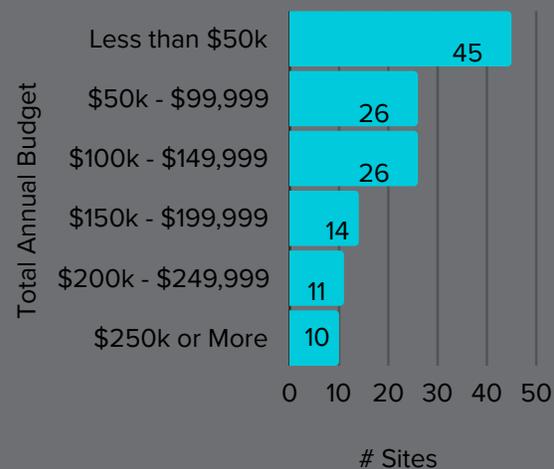
82%

say their facility's location and visibility is excellent or good

40%

say their building needs significant repair, renovation, or replacement

MINISTRY BUDGET SIZE



"When we think of campus ministry we often focus on the programs and the numbers, but what I am most proud of this year is how being present on campus impacted the lives of particular students. In times of questioning, crisis, or isolation, I was there to minister to individuals in need because of Lutheran Campus Ministry."

~ A campus pastor in Minnesota

ELCA Campus Ministry Staff

Rev. Emily Klock Tveite

Program Director, ELCA Campus Ministry

Campus Ministry Contract Staff

Rev. Laura Sinche, Education Coordinator*
[Vacant], R1 & R2 Facilitator*

Rev. Cassandra Lamb, R3 Facilitator*

Rev. Brad Fuerst, R4 Facilitator*

Rev. Jon Fry, R5 Facilitator*

Rev. Robert Abner, R6 Facilitator*

Rev. Alicia Anderson, R7 & R8 Facilitator*

Rev. Andrew Rickel, R9 Facilitator*

*5 hours per week or fewer

LuMin Network Board of Directors

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Your partnership
makes Campus
Ministry possible.
Thank you.

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