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WINTHROP ECUMENICAL LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Constance calls Charleston, SC, her home. While working towards her high school graduation she ran track, swam, and was very involved in theater which she liked. Her religious exposure was not positive. Every other weekend, she attended a Lutheran church (not ELCA) with her dad's side of the family. Also, with a friend, she occasionally went to a Baptist church. Constance remembers: *Although I did not know myself very well, I knew that I did not really align with some of the things they taught and said.*

Those less than positive church experiences made Constance reluctant to engage with church. After arriving at Winthrop, a friend, who was a Lutheran, wanted to try out WELCM but needed someone to go with her. She asked Constance who replied: *I used to go to a Lutheran church and I didn't like it--but I'll try it again.*

Constance tried WELCM with her friend—and experienced a change of heart. WELCM's hospitality and caring atmosphere transformed her into a regular. In her view, *WELCM is so welcoming. It really lives up to its name. I don't believe I have ever been to a church space that has been so LGBTQ+ friendly. I had never seen that in a church before. And it was really important.*

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WELCM's vision and mission spoke deeply to Constance: *WELCM's main focus is about love. And that is so important for a church, because today many churches have become focused on hate. That is not WELCM's purpose.*

According to Constance, WELCM has been successful in nurturing her faith. She put it this way: *For a while I did not want faith to be part of my life because I saw it as this negative thing that would make me very anxious or upset. And now I don't see it like that anymore. Now I see it more like a light and like a loving space. I feel my faith has definitely grown a lot.*

WELCM NEWS

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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT, CONT'D

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The love and appreciation Constance has for WELCM shows up in how she describes WELCM to others: *It's really a good place if you want to get back into your faith; especially if you once were in the faith and then you lost it because of something that happened in church. Or if you are just trying to discover the faith for the first time; it's really a great place to go—because it is just so welcoming and such a warm space.*

SAVANNAH'S BAPTISM



This past November, we had the pleasure of celebrating the baptism of one of our beloved peer ministers, Savannah (2nd fr. r.) who has been a member of WELCM since she first came to Winthrop (2022). She graduated in December. We are so glad to have been part of her faith journey!

WELCM OUTINGS

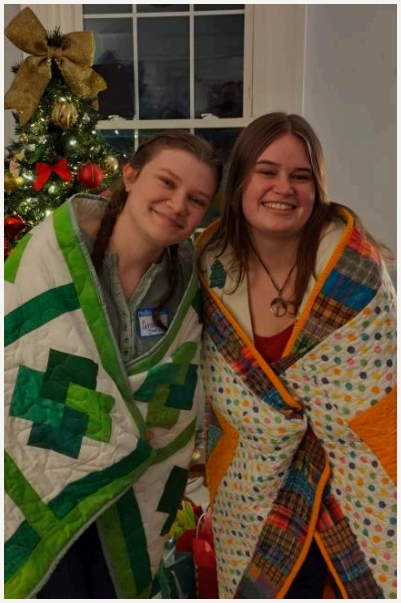




We had two major outings: one to a horse farm where we got to delve deeper into Psalm 23, and the other was to the Bethel men's shelter for our bi-annual community service project. Thank you to Jeanine and Tommy Laughlin (Amazing Grace LC, Waxhaw) for inviting us to their farm and to Bob Stonebraker for always helping us give back at the men's shelter!

CHRISTMAS PARTY





Merry Christmas! At out 2026 Christmas party we shared dinner, enjoyed a fun White Elephant gift exchange, and celebrated our graduates, Savannah and Constance. Savannah graduated with a degree in Early Childhood Education and has since moved to Ashville. Constance graduated with a degree in Environmental Studies and is now back in Charleston. Congrats you guys; and God's blessings! Good luck in this new chapter of your lives!

CATCHING UP!

Paige was an active member of WELCM from the end of her sophomore year (2022) through May 2024. Since then, she has been busy building both her career and her education while still calling Rock Hill home.

She now works full-time in Charlotte as a technical writer for a telecommunications company, a role she has truly been enjoying. In addition, she recently began pursuing a Master's degree in UX Design along with a certification in UX Research at Brandeis University. She is set to graduate in December 2026.

Despite balancing work and graduate school, she has still found time to travel and explore. Last spring, she visited the Netherlands and Belgium and is planning another international trip this summer. She also spent time hiking in Washington State and has enjoyed getting back into reading for fun.

It's been exciting to see all that Paige has been up to, and we love staying connected as she continues this next chapter!



Paige in front of one of the many canals in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

FROM OUR PEER MINISTERS:



Hi everyone! My name is Clara and this is my second (and final) semester being a peer minister for WELCM as I will be graduating this semester! This semester I am excited to lead our WELCM student outing, where we will hike Crowders Mountain and appreciate God's creations. These outings meant so much to me before I was a peer minister and helped me make friends with the other WELCM members. I am excited to help bring everyone together through this event!



My name is Vanessa and I am an english major and a junior here at Winthrop. I transferred in last fall and finding a ministry was really important to me. My roommate Savannah, who was a peer minister here, introduced me to WELCM my first week on campus and I immediately loved it. They've built such an accepting and loving community here that I haven't experienced anywhere else. Last year they made me feel at home right away, so this semester I'm very excited to give a little back by being a peer minister.



Hi everybody! My name is Roxanne, and I am so excited to say that this semester I am a peer minister in training. This past semester, I have grown to love this community so much, and I cannot wait to do my part and help WELCM flourish. I am thrilled to be behind the scenes, "revamp" some things, and grow in my faith surrounded by amazing people.

Thank You to WELCM's Supporters

Several congregations and individuals provide ongoing and occasional support to the ministry of WELCM. We give thanks for financial and material gifts, for dinners, for special occasions, for prayers, and for personal support. A detailed thank-you note will be published in the next newsletter.

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