

WINTHROP ECUMENICAL LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY

A NOTE FROM THE CAMPUS MINISTER

It's hard to believe, but this spring marks the end of my fourth year at WELCM! Time has been flying— the main reason I know four years have passed is that Ellery McNeill and Grace Tristan, who were freshers my first year here, are graduating! In fact, seven WELCM students are graduating this May. We are so proud of all of them for persevering through the hardest college experience we've ever witnessed — and especially grateful for Ellery and Grace, who served two years as student board member, and peer minister, respectively.

In this Spring 2022 semester, we have been exploring the theme of spiritual resilience by looking more deeply at the liturgical calendar. We have been walking with Jesus through the wilderness journey of Lent, and noticing how our individual stories fit inside the larger stories of family, church, and society, and how it all nests inside the Great Story of God's extravagant love for the whole world.

These themes have been our focus in Tuesday Gathering conversations and the discussions at our Spring Spirituality Retreat, which was held April 2 at the Starrette Farm Retreat Center (see p.2 for photos), as well as the Region 9 Lutheran Student Movement retreat, which stayed virtual on April 9. We also enjoyed having Rev. Lamont Wells and our own P. Rachel as special guests this term, and as we go to press, we're excited to have P. Gregg coming to talk with us about how to find a church to join after graduation!

Now that WELCM is again a committee of Grace Lutheran, we are incredibly grateful for the increased support we are receiving from our committee members, pastors, church council, and donors! We started a new program of one-on-one mentorship called *WELCM Friends*, and students and Grace partners are feeling excited about the possibilities of mutual encouragement. If you're excited about the work God's doing at WELCM, you can support us, too, at welcm.org/donate. We covet your prayers for our 2022 graduates and our summer planning season—thank you for all the ways you stay connected to campus ministry and help us create a place that feels like good news for Winthrop students!

Grace & peace,
Olga-Maria

WELCM NEWS

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A NOTE FROM THE PEER MINSTER

Kellie Dasher

Hello friends... So far this semester has been great for WELCM! I am enjoying the Peer Minister role as we have started back with in-person Tuesday night Gatherings. Meeting face-to-face has been more connecting for our ministry. It also means we get to eat together at the table or in the garden. Our mealtime is special to me, because it is when we all get to know each other better.

Along with my role as Peer Minister this semester, I am also doing my senior-year internship at HOPE of Rock Hill. Through service there, I have connected with many members of Grace, whom I see daily. It feels good to know that I am surrounded by many people who care about me and about WELCM so much. As our WELCM Friends mentoring program picks up, I know that the ties between us college students and the members of Grace will be even stronger. I am excited to see all that we can accomplish by the end of the semester!



Spring Spirituality Retreat

Ivy & Deja enjoying the labyrinth at Starrette Farm Retreat House.

Ivy said afterward, "I feel so grounded... and lighter at the same time!"



Skyler, Cat, Amelia, and Lexi finding sunshine and fellowship around the pond. Amelia reflected, "I only wish we could have stayed longer!"



Olga-Maria leading group discussion on healing spiritual trauma

ALUM SPOTLIGHT

WELCM Alums in Service to Others

Taylor Gibby: class of 2018 Director of Youth Ministries

Taylor Gibby was our first Peer Minister, in 2018, confirmed in the Episcopal church as she graduated in May of that year. Taylor developed her sense of God's call in her life through volunteering at WELCM, experiencing the Vocare retreat, and then helping lead it. She has gone on to serve in youth ministry at Grace Episcopal Church in Greenville, SC, her hometown.

Taylor has recently accepted a new call to serve as Director of Youth Ministries at Trinity Cathedral in Columbia. We are so pleased for Taylor and proud of her service to God's kingdom!



Grace Kirven: class of 2020 Child Life Specialist

"Going to the hospital is never fun, but for a child it can be extremely frightening and stressful. Child life specialists are healthcare professionals who help guide patients and families through hospitalization to reduce the stress and anxiety that can be experienced. The biggest way child life specialists help to reduce this stress is by incorporating play. We use play as a modality for self-expression, to normalize the hospital environment, educate patients and families, and as distraction from pain and during procedures. Just as doctors assist the physical needs of patients, child life specialists assist the mind and soul to promote positive emotional well-being!"

Being a child life specialist has been a goal of mine since being at Winthrop, so it is really exciting that I am about to finish my graduate classes this spring. Along with finishing my classes at UGA this semester, I am interviewing for child life internships and hope to be a full time child life intern starting in September. As I come to the end of my child life education, I have found myself falling more in love with the profession. I have always wanted to work with children and have found that child life is a combination of the many ways I love interacting with kids: educating, enhancing development, and promoting positive coping strategies!"

RAISING AWARENESS

One of our themes this spring has been generating awareness of disabilities and neurodiversity! We have had several student-led discussions, and posted helpful content on Instagram (see right).

Particularly in our conversation on neurodivergence, a less visible disability, students worked toward building a more inclusive community for one another by sharing their own differences and needs.

"Please be patient," one student asked, as she explained the way her ADHD and trouble processing numbers sometimes leads her to feel chronically behind, and to compare herself negatively to others.

What helps? we asked. Time and patience, was the answer. Sometimes medication; mindful practices, and self-care. But what we can offer each other is affirmation, and consistency, the reassurance of presence and non-judgment — all values we try to cultivate at WELCM!

- Invisible disabilities: It is not possible to realize someone has a disability just by looking at them. (ex. the person is colorblind)



- Visible disabilities: It is possible to realize someone has a disability just by looking at them. (ex. the person uses a wheelchair)

Most disabilities are somewhere in between:

For example, someone may use a wheelchair part-time, or an autistic person may stim (use repetitive movements or noises) in distress but not all the time

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