



Report to ELCA Synods, February 2013

David Vásquez, Karri Anderson & Mike Blair, campus pastors

Luther College Office for College Ministries

<http://ministry.luther.edu>

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.—Philippians 1:3-6

For people living in an age of 24/7 wireless connections to all manner of networks, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Skype, YouTube and more, Philippians calls us to formative visions of sustainable and abiding networks. Paul's technology to build networks included spoken and written word, breaking bread, gathering in community and face-to-face conversation. While the church has taken many new forms since the letter to Philippi and technologies have changed by leaps and bounds, the church is still at its core a network joined by shared faith commitments and practices. Similarly, the "liberating power of faith and learning" at the heart of Luther College's mission is an affirmation that requires a vibrant network—congregations, camps, families, households, synods and faith communities. Like the Philippians, we are bound together in a wireless network of gratitude, prayer and sharing in the gospel. As a community of learning, Luther is charged with developing knowledge about God's world through the sciences, arts and humanities and the many opportunities for learning beyond the classroom. As a community of faith, we share practices of worship, study, service and outreach shaped by the intersection of liturgical seasons and the academic year.

Pastor Amy Zalk Larson is doing a sabbatical project this year, *Beyond Busy: Be Still, Behold*. Her sabbatical includes participation in the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation's Clergy Spiritual Life and Leadership Program. We are grateful for the ministry of Pastor Karri Anderson from Coon Rapids, MN, who joins College Ministries as interim campus pastor for the 2012-13 academic year. Pastor Karri has served several intentional interim pastor calls in the Minneapolis Area Synod.

Luther's Student Congregation offers a host of opportunities for leadership, faith development, learning, witnessing, outreach, and ministries of justice and service. Our 2013 Spring Break Habitat for Humanity trip will travel to Texas to work with San Antonio HFH. Two small group ministries shaped around contemplative practices, Journey Conversations and t.r.e.c., have become core practices of face-to-face presence in life together. Participants in Journey Conversations explore interfaith conversations and speak of how the experience teaches them about listening well, speaking truth, and practicing compassion. t.r.e.c. offers students opportunities to visit seminaries, learn about the candidacy process, listen to one another's stories and respond with open, compassionate questions. Luther continues to be a leader among ELCA colleges in numbers of alumni enrolled in ELCA seminaries. In the last ten years (2003-2013), 116 alumni have attended ELCA seminaries: 89 have graduated and 27 are currently enrolled. These numbers tell the story of vital partnerships supporting students' faith journeys.

Our partnership with Synods and ELCA ministries is embodied in a variety of events and programs. WIYLDE, a summer leadership and spiritual formation event for high school youth, continues with partnership between the Northeastern Iowa Synod, Southeastern Iowa Synod, congregations and College Ministries. Pastor David Vásquez has served as a presenter at ELCA Glocal events around the country, engaging congregations, synods and communities in dialogue and Bible study on questions of faith and migration. A team of Luther students, faculty and staff assisted with the high ropes course at the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans. Church Youth Fest hosted a concert with Agape, Rachel Kurtz and Lost & Found, raising \$4917.00 to benefit the 100 Wells project and the ELCA Malaria Campaign. Pastor Mike Blair serves as co-director of the Grace Institute for Spiritual Formation with professor emeritus Brad Hanson. For more information, visit: <http://www.luther.edu/graceinstitute/>

Living out the call to stewardship of the earth, Luther continues to be a leader in sustainability. Our efforts include a summer internship for Greening of the Church, a program to encourage and support churches in greening their congregations and households. Particular attention is given to churches in the Decorah & Mason City areas through the support of the Kinney-Lindstrom foundation. Last summer included Decorah's first Inter-Church Garden, organized by the interns and staffed by church volunteers, with the harvest benefitting area Food Pantries.

We give thanks for the congregations, synods, camps, ministries, faith communities and households joined to Luther by a faithful network of prayer, gratitude and sharing in the gospel. Soli Deo Gloria.