

# QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What were the significant cultural trends when you were in your late teens/early 20's? Popular songs? Fashion trends? TV shows?
- What were the significant political events during those years? Were there things that made you hopeful? Afraid?
- Did you see the church as having a voice in culture or politics? In what way?
- What were the significant events in your life? What made you hopeful? Afraid?
- Was your faith or the organized church helpful in addressing those hopes or fears?

# What is true for college students today?

- Undergrads born between 1995-2000
- Less likely to be raised in religious family (decline since 1970's)
- Christianity is generally associated with Christian right
- Grew up in world with increasingly polarized values/world views
- More scheduled with higher expectations and less down time
- Financial uncertainty
  - 70% graduate with \$35,000+ debt
  - almost 50% of UWM students report hunger
- Concern about climate change/health insurance/gun violence
- Reports of anxiety on the rise

# What is also true?

- Lower rates of teen pregnancy, having sex later with fewer partners, lower drug and alcohol use, lower divorce rates
- Most diverse generation in US history with greatest appreciation for diversity (snowflakes = empathetic and just)
- Frugal, creative, altruistic, and connected
- Ready to dig in and try to change the world for the better
- But have many other options besides church to do justice, engage in spiritual practices, and create community

# Choosing Our Religion - Elizabeth Drescher

- *Former Lutheran, Priscilla Danford, a 19 year old college student in Chicago who described herself as “just spiritual” talked about a series of summer mission trips - one to New Orleans, one to Kentucky, one to Guatemala - as ‘probably the most significant things I ever did.’ She also described a number of youth group projects that she found meaningful, and reported that she still had a number of close friends from youth group. All of that, she told me, “really helped make me who I am now and kind of laid out the person that I want to be in the future.” But she didn’t see church affiliation or participation as necessary for that.*

# What does the church have that no one else has?

- A relationship with the God made known to us in Jesus Christ who has come to transform us and the whole creation!
- We need to both stand with Jesus in justice and care of this world AND nurture a personal relationship with the God that sustains us.
- Worship, study, service, community gatherings need to be clear in how they are deepening a connection to Christ.
- Young adults want a biblical faith!

# Student Faith Communities: THREE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS

Students found these faith communities personally impactful and dependable, especially in times of need.



## Expansively welcoming

The community was intentionally welcoming and supportive of young adults including those who were excluded by other segments of society. The litmus test for this element was outspoken inclusion of LGBTQ+ persons.



## Grounded in Christian faith

The Lutheran Campus Ministry community's identity was centered in a thoughtful and progressive understanding of the Christian faith and its teachings.



## Reaching out to others in service

The community made a difference in other's lives and provided students with opportunities to participate in these meaningful service activities.



## Lutheran Campus Ministry's unique experience of **BELONGING AND SUPPORT**

# Where do young adults feel most **CONNECTED TO GOD?**



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# STUDENT PERCEPTIONS of the Ministry

What do students say about campus ministry?



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# KEY CHARACTERISTICS

of a vital young adult faith community:

What do students say are the key characteristics of a VITAL young adult faith community?



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# Describe the LCM Student Faith Community IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

The LCM Faith Community was a place where students could address their questions, explore their curiosity, reflect critically and learn more about faith and life in interesting and challenging ways.

Students described the "atmosphere" of LCM Student Faith Communities as both:



calming/relaxing



energizing/motivating

More often than any other characteristic, students described Student Faith Communities as robust, generative communities that:



welcome



support



connect



"It influenced  
my thinking."

"It touched  
my heart."

"It tended  
my spirit."

# FUTURE INVOLVEMENT in a Faith Community

43%

of 18-23 year olds in the National Study of Youth and Religion plan to **be involved** in a religious community in the future.



89%

of young adults involved in LCM Student Faith Communities indicated they plan to **remain active** in a religious community as adults.



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# Lutheran Campus Ministry participants: A HOPEFUL SIGN!



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# QUESTIONS ABOUT TECHNOLOGY

- Are there ways that young folks have already begun integrating technology into meaningful spiritual formation?
- *One former student is doing an online Bible study using zoom*
- *Zao Milwaukee promotes upcoming events with pastor on Facebook live*
  
- Do folks who have such a familiar intimacy with technology and social connection mediated through technology find such connections and community to be equal/greater/lesser/different value than embodied or physically present connections and community?
- *It tends to be an extension of, but not a substitution for, for in person time*

