

CAMPUS MINISTRY - UNIVERSITY of ILLINOIS CSIS Synod Assembly Report, 2021

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church and Campus Center



It has been a hard year for all of us. By God's grace, we have remained vibrant during this pandemic. We've kept going with online worship, outside worship, online Bible studies, online book discussions, our faith and science ministry, bonfires, movie watch parties, and more. Our students have sent cards to the elderly, food to the hungry, and care packages to the COVID-19 positive. They've discovered new ways to serve our neighbor outdoors, where it's safer to gather. Mental health has been a huge challenge this year, and St. Andrew's has provided care to students who are suffering.

Our Music Minister this year is from our synod! Sophomore Nathan Waterson, raised in faith by the saints of God at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Roberts has kept us praising God creatively with virtual music. You can see a lot of that music at our YouTube Worship Playlist here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtp3BY9Ck-IBpgAtM9Mus1VXmb1VKdtpF>

A blessing over Christmas break: a student who graduated last year and had worshiped with us for a couple of years as an undergrad wrote asking if he could be baptized at St. Andrew's since he'd not been able to join a congregation in graduate school out East during pandemic, and he believed he was ready. We gathered a tiny group and celebrated the gift of baptism into Christ!



Due to the support of our partners – that includes a lot of you – we have exciting plans. A generous gift from a private donor funded an air ventilation system in our sanctuary that makes it safer for us to gather in person. We are working on an accessible yard project so we can keep meeting outside for worship and fellowship. We are getting concrete about one of our greatest needs: a first-floor accessible kitchenette so we don't have to exclude our students who use wheelchairs anymore from meal prep and meal fellowship.

Finally, we are thrilled to announce that our board opened a new staff position at St. Andrew's to meet the changing needs of campus ministry in the ELCA. Due to strong support of our ministry, we were able to expand the hours of our previous part time Administrative Assistant to become a full-time Assistant Director. The new position continues all the previous tasks and adds the critical work of development: building more and stronger relationships with our alumni, partner congregations near and far, and individual supporters. We modeled our position on similar positions at ELCA campus ministry sites around the nation that have already made this change and have been greatly blessed by it. With and through this new worker in the Kingdom of God, we trust that *God will provide* so we can continue more sustainably and vibrantly

the ministry of the Gospel to, for, and with students. Our new Assistant Director is also from our synod: Mary Corkery, of Good Shepherd in Champaign!



If your congregation doesn't know about campus ministry, peek at our social media and websites, and we'd love to make a visit someday. If your youth don't know about campus ministry, please tell them. If you want to visit us sometime after travel is safe, we'd love to welcome you and give you a tour.

We give thanks to God for your support, synod! It is not an exaggeration to say that we would not be here without you, and we are so excited about how God is leading this ministry at UIUC. Thank you and God bless you all.

Grace and Peace in Christ, Pr Amy Thoren
Pastor and Director

Website: <http://www.lutherancampuscenter.org>

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