

# WINTHROP EPISCOPAL LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY

## PROGRAM UPDATES

God's Spirit is on the move at WELCM! We have been growing, despite all the limitations of pandemic: having most of our programming online, not being able to hold retreats or fellowship gatherings, and not being able to table on campus. Students have been seeking community and spiritual support and they have been finding their way to WELCM. We currently have over 20 students involved in various programs, including Sunday Evening Prayer in the Little Chapel, Thursday afternoon Reflection time, which recently moved from Zoom to the garden behind the White House, and Tuesday evening Gatherings, which now start with dinner in the garden and move to an online conversation following.

Our Tuesday evening conversations have centered this year on the in breaking of God's kingdom, and issues in Christian social justice. We have had guest speakers, including Diversity Peer Educators from Winthrop, who led us in a talk about allyship. We have also watched videos from The Work of The People, including *Interrogating Narratives* by René August, which led us to talk about intersectionality, the multiple layers of oppression that call for multifaceted approaches to justice and restoration. The depth of our conversations and the openness of students to think in new ways and share from their hearts is tremendously exciting. Even our newcomers are opening up, diving deep, connecting with and enriching our community as we seek God's will and God's way of love. *Olga-Maria*

## WELCM NEWS

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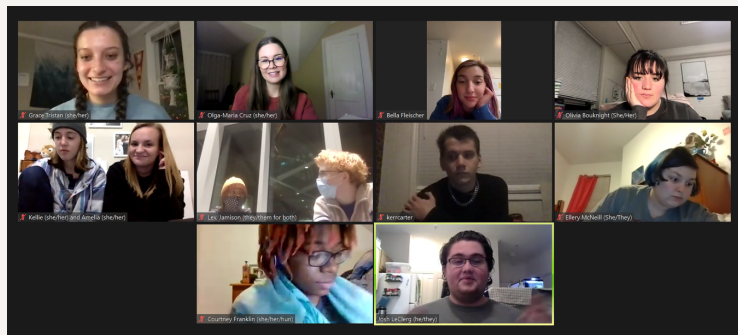


# A NOTE FROM THE PEER MINISTER

**Community Time, Grace Tristan**

Community Time is an integral part to building community at WELCM. We inherited this practice from our alums, where we take the last 20 minutes of our Tuesday night Gathering program to share high and low points of the previous week, and prayer requests, along with "God moments" --ways we have seen God at work in our week. Students can choose to share any or all of these four options. Community Time is grounded in listening and strengthens the group as we bear witness to the important moments of each other's lives.

Regularly, God shows up in answered prayer requests and we get to share joy with the group that prayed over that request, which is a unifying experience. Sharing in Community Time demonstrates bravery and vulnerability, which leads to deeper connections within the group. In some instances, Community Time is the best way to offer each other spiritual support. For example, we continued our weekly programming over the summer, and several of our online Gatherings consisted solely of Community Time, to help students process the difficult circumstances of the pandemic. The root of any relationship is understanding, and when we foster conversations that allow us to understand each other better, we build a community centered in love.



"I'm so thankful that we get to finally see everyone in the garden for dinner on Tuesdays. It is so great to see everyone's faces and get to meet and talk to new friends!" *Amelia White*



# PROGRAMS



Courtney Franklin

## Thursday Reflection, Courtney Franklin

At our Thursday afternoon Reflection time, we use a method related to *lectio divina*, where we listen to that week's Gospel passage three times, listening for the Holy Spirit's direction in where the passage applies to our lives, and where God might be inviting us to grow or change.

Courtney Franklin is a regular participant. She says, "I really enjoy Thursday Reflection with WELCM because it gives me a time in my week where I don't have to think analytically--I can give my mind a break and let my spirit lead me instead. A lot of Bible studies I have attended in the past require some prior knowledge of the text, which can make it a little confusing and hard to understand at times. But since this form of Bible study does not, I can stay in the moment. It always opens the door to something new and inspiring, whether we are reading a new or a well-known text!"

## Sunday Evening Prayer

On Sunday evenings, we host a thirty-minute service of Evening Prayer in the Little Chapel on Winthrop's campus. It includes the lectionary readings--led by students--personal and intercessory prayer, silent meditation, and some simple chants from the Taizé monastic community. Third-year student Jamison Allen comments that they keep coming back to Evening Prayer because "Being at night, it is more serene than church, and it's not crowded with people I don't know. It's not a traditional service geared toward a sermon, it's more prayerlike. Chapel has my favorite parts of church without the sensory overload and distractions I can experience in a larger service. I can digest the Word better in this setting. It's a way for me to take time to set aside for the Lord, and it's short, so it fits my attention span! I feel refreshed every time and ready for the week ahead."

Senior Josh LeClerc says, "Evening Prayer is very peaceful for me; it's an opportunity to be in communion with fellow believers in a small setting, a quiet setting, and it's an opportunity to center in a way that a bigger service wouldn't be. The focus is on centering rather than teaching." We have been pleased to have more students regularly attending Evening Prayer, and look forward to opening it up to even more folks in the next school year, when the limitations on indoor gatherings are lifted.



The Little Chapel, Winthrop University



Josh LeClerc



## Wellness Nook

To support students' mental wellbeing during an especially stressful year, we created a Wellness Nook in the underutilized front room of the ministry house. It features a weighted blanket, a light therapy lamp, lavender oil, coloring pages and pencils, and prompts for centering prayer. Newer additions include a finger labyrinth and a toolkit of spiritual practices for processing loss. Several students have been utilizing this resource regularly, and report that they feel calmer and more relaxed on the days they use the Nook.

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