SUMMER 2026 · ISSUE 29

WINTHROP ECUMENICAL LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

In Clara's childhood and youth, which included residing in Rock Hill and Charleston, a lot of church and family dynamics coalesced to push her away from God. And so, when she came to Winthrop, she had no intention of engaging religious matters and no interest in churches or campus ministries.



Somehow, Clara found her way into the WELCM community, First, she encountered a WELCM peer minister (along with her dog) and the WELCM campus minister at a Winthrop Convocation fair. She connected with them and felt an affinity for the values undergirding WELCM. She recalls: *They were super nice. This is cool*!

Then she took on a class project that required her to go beyond her comfort zone. She selected exploring the WELCM campus ministry because *the people there were nice, they were cool*. Clara began attending the gatherings, shared her struggles, and received support from students and the campus minister. She recalls: *I worked through my resentment and religious trauma. I realized that God is loving and cares for us.*

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Clara became a regular at the WELCM gatherings. She describes the "secret sauce" that kept her coming back: *I enjoyed the company of everyone and I enjoyed being able to come to God and religion in a very comfortable, safe place where none of us had all the answers and we were all figuring it out together.*

It was the collaborative, grace- and context-based Lutheran approach to the bible that made a big impression on Clara: *Having a conversation and not being told what to believe played a big part in why I kept coming to WELCM. Also, we are a community of people who welcome everyone. When I first came to WELCM, we had an Atheist and a Jewish person. We've had Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, and Lutherans, and people, like me, trying to figure out where they fit. All are welcome, and special attempts are made that everyone feels included.*

All are welcome!
Special attempts are made that everyone feels included.

WELCM NEWS

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Scan below to support us!

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT CONT'D

Clara reflected on the progress she has made: *What really helped me to come back to God, faith, and religion was learning to contextualize the bible and religion. I used to poke a lot of holes in things, but when I learned to look at the context, things begin to make sense. Now, I feel secure in my beliefs. I have some of the big answers. But I'm not opposed to broadening my horizons.*

Jesus is Clara's role model for living the godly life or the God-proximate life. She put it this way: *To me, Jesus is the sign that God loves us. I believe Jesus died for our sins. I appreciate his teachings. However, I believe that living like Jesus, walking in his footsteps, is the important thing.*

After graduation, Clara plans to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, the Teacher, by teaching at the high school level, hopefully in the Charleston area.

CONGRATS GRADS



Clara graduated with a MAT and is moving to Summerville to teach Biology at Summerville High School.



Emmie graduated with a degree in English and will be pursing a Masters degree as she teaches English at Lake Wylie High School.



Emma graduated with a degree in Political Science and Environmental Studies. She is currently taking some time off to travel during the summer.



Grace graduated with a degree in Social Work. She will be returning to Winthrop to pursue her Masters in Social work. She is also planning to get married in October.



Maggie graduated with a degree in Elementary Education. She'll pursue her masters in Curriculum and Instruction and start her teaching career in 2027.



Mary graduated from York Technical College. She will pursue EMT training and join the Navy.

FAREWELL/GRADUATION PARTY

Thank you to everyone who participated in the annual end-of-the-year farewell party! Our WELCM community came together to provide the students with a delicious meal and a special service to send our graduates out into the world. The service included music provided by our very own WELCM band (below, right), Holy Communion, and a special blessing for the graduates. Each graduate also received a prayer blanket, a framed "next steps" prayer, and a Peace and Justice bible.

The students also came together to make a very personal farewell gift for Pastor Hahn (below, left) so he won't forget them in his retirement! Congratulations to Pastor Hahn and our graduates as they enter their next chapters in life! We will miss you all!







THANK YOU TO WELCM'S SUPPORTERS

We would like to express our gratitude to the following organizations and individuals who supported the WELCM campus ministry with financial gifts and/or served as dinner hosts during the 2025/26 academic year. We are also very grateful for the prayer support and written and oral expressions of encouragement and support given to us. *(We apologize for any inadvertent omissions. Please let us know.)*

Institutional/Congregational Gifts: The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) via LuMin; The South Carolina Synod; Grace and Epiphany Lutheran Churches, Rock Hill, SC; Reformation Lutheran Church, Lancaster, SC; Crossroads LC in Indian Land, SC; Amazing Grace LC in Waxhaw, NC; Pine Grove LC, Lone Star, SC; St. Peter 's LC, Pawley 's Island, SC; and Redeemer LC, Columbia, SC.

THANK YOU CONT'D

Individual Gifts: Anonymous**,** Lori Brown, Doug Gay, Ron and Elisa Gordon, Pastor and Mrs. Haggerty, Lyn and Norbert Hahn, Ann and Ron Johnson, McKenzie Kargel, Tracie Rennell, Cynthia Roddey, Bob and Terry Schavey, Kathy Schwandt, John and Kathy Taylerson, Rick and Dee Westbrook, Tonya Whitehead, and Miho Yasukawa.

Dinner Hosts Fall 2025: WELCM Committee, Bob Stonebreaker, Betty Sue Seigler, Leslie Dunnett, Amazing Grace LC (Jean McMullen and team), Angie and Butch Patteson, Anne Johnson, Crossroads LC (Karen Kasting and team), Don and Linda Horst, Lori Brown, Brandon Quinn, Donna Richter, Lisa Choate, Nora Sliney, Epiphany LC (Erin Wiedel and team).

Dinner Hosts Spring 2026: WELCM Committee, Bob Stonebreaker, Angie Patteson, Amazing Grace LC (Jean McMullen and team), Grace Lutheran (pancake supper), Epiphany LC (Jo and Charlie Giliberti), Anne Johnson, Tom Ludlow and Trish Kemper, Lori Brown, Crossroads LC (Karen Kasting and team), Evelyn Eikmeyer-Quinones, Nora and Bill Sliney, Kerri Howley, Rose Knechtel.

The WELCM Support Committee: Sabrina Blanks (chair), Lori Brown, Tim Hall, Doug Gay (treasurer), Carla Harrison, Ann Johnson, Brendan Quinn, Kathy Schwandt, Bill Sliney, and Bob Stonebraker.

A NOTE FROM PASTOR HAHN



Farewell, WELCM. The time has come for me to say "goodbye." The last 30 months have been very special to me.

- Having been invited into the lives, realities, joys and struggles of the students has been a great privilege.
- The support and encouragement of the WELCM Committee has made a big difference.
- The growing number of individuals, congregations, and organizations offering financial and hands-on support made campus ministry possible.
- The gathering house provided by Grace LC was a big blessing!

There were too many highpoints, special encounters, and meaningful experiences for me to list. However, from the many, many fond memories I am taking with me, two stand out: The celebration of Alex's baptism in the Atlantic Ocean near N. Myrtle Beach and Savannah's baptismal worship at Grace Lutheran Church.

The search for the next campus minister is underway. An interim campus minister has stepped forward. The WELCM Committee that supports the students, the campus minister, and the ministry welcomes new members and new ideas. Two very able peer ministers will return in the fall. Good stuff is happening.

WELCM continues. Please keep supporting it. God's Peace! -- *Pastor Hahn*

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