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IGNITE is the official publication of LCMS Campus Ministry, a Recognized Service Organization serving The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and dedicated to the campus mission field.

*LCMS Campus Ministry equips leaders to make disciples who make disciples on campus.*

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**What a difference**

**Good friends, campus ministry, and my path to faith**

By Jessi Smith

The day that I came to the Lord is a day that I will cherish for the rest of my life. Unlike many of my fellow campus ministry members, I wasn't a kid who grew up going to church, ever. Even attending a church service for Christmas or Easter was a foreign concept to me. I always had this curiosity about God and the Bible, and every night before I would go to sleep, I would fold my hands to pray even though I sometimes felt silly because I didn't know how. Ironically, throughout this journey and my walk into faith, I've come to realize that there is no right or wrong way to talk to God.

When I first came to college, church was not exactly what I was seeking, but it's what I found. Now, it's what I've come to know and love. My boyfriend, Ryan, and my good friend Bri, both of whom I met at the beginning of my freshman year at EIU, are two of the people I thank most for that. They came into my life for a reason and I strongly believe that they were the ones who were meant to show me God's light.

After joining Immanuel Lutheran Campus Ministry, my faith life took off in a big way. I attended a one-on-one bible study with Bri and Greg, our campus minister, and I am now involved in a group study for students. I started reading the Bible, going to church, and serving God; that's when it all changed for me.

Before, I had talks with my dad.  
*Now, I talk with my Father in Heaven.*

Before, I thought I only had a couple of brothers and sisters.  
*But now, I know that I have so many more.*

Before, I was embarrassed to talk about faith.  
*Now, I smile at the thought of it.*

Before, I thought I didn't know how to pray.  
*But now, I get the chills every time my hands fold together and I bow my head.*

Before, I thought that birthdays just mean turning one year older.  
*And now, I celebrate a different birthday; the day that I was baptized to be a child of God.*

Before, I had it all wrong.  
*But now, I know that this life I live has been made all right.*

Before, I lived this life, not knowing what lay ahead.  
*But now, I live this life knowing that I will forever get to be with my Father in Heaven.*



Jessi and Eastern Illinois University LCMS campus ministry leader Greg Witto

And until that day, when I come face to face with my Lord, our God, I will sing His praises and be joyous in this life that He has blessed me with.

*Jessi Smith is a junior at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, Ill. DCE Greg Witto leads the Immanuel Lutheran Campus Ministry at EIU.*

**LCMS Campus Ministry: busy year ahead!**

**2011**

- Sep 1 - Oct 31** Video Contest
- Oct 7-9** Student Mission Challenge
- Oct 13 - 16** Beautiful Feet Mission Conference
- Oct 1 - Nov 15** BikeWalkRun-Athon Fall  
You choose the weekend!
- Nov 27** Campus Ministry Sunday
- Dec 26 - 31** Texas Underground Session 1

**2012**

- Jan 1 - 7** Texas Underground Session 2
- Feb 10 - 11** Leadership/Peer Ministry Conference
- Mar 4-10** Spring Break Underground  
Session 1
- Mar 11 - 17** Spring Break Underground  
Session 2
- Mar 18 - 24** Spring Break Underground  
Session 3
- Mar 15 - Apr 30** BikeWalkRun-Athon Spring  
You choose the weekend!

Check pp. 2-3 for more information on these events!

## Executive Director Notes

It's another school year! We pray that God will bless our campus ministries with opportunities to lead, to witness, to reach out, and to grow. We pray, too, to be able to assist and support you in your work.

Coming off a year of successful pilots, LCMS Campus Ministry offers you more of the same (great) events beginning soon: **Student Mission Challenge** leader weekend in October; **BikeWalkRun-Athon**—your choice, fall or spring; **Texas Underground** in December or January; a choice of 3 **Spring Break Undergrounds**; **Video Contest**; **Campus Ministry Sunday** and more. Check your calendars and start saving dates.

We have seen steady use of our **StudentConnect** student referral tool during the last weeks of summer and hope this resource continues to help put you in touch with student members of our LCMS congregations and others. In particular we have seen an increase in requests from students heading to schools where there is no known LCMS presence—a real challenge! Please join us in asking God to lead us to solid ministry options when we get requests like those!

One thing Lutheran students in a campus situation like that can do is consider forming a Lutheran Student Fellowship chapter. You're no doubt aware that although LSF chapters typically form in connection with a local church, LSF, as a student-driven organization, offers an alternative for unusual circumstances: independent groups made up entirely of students. LSF's national advisors (Pastoral Advisor and Facilitators) are available for assistance in getting started, as well as for ongoing guidance. Contact LSF directly to learn more.

(BTW—enjoy the LSF article in this issue, "Change the way you do Christmas. *Conspire*." It might just make you think—or knit scarves.)

Our online education curriculum has a new name **CROSS Training!** Courses available this fall include "Declare and Defend" (Rev. Mark Jasa), "Managing Your Money" (Andrew Berson), "Communicating and Crisis Management" (Jeremy Lotz), and "Church Planting/Starting Anew" (Dr. Yohannes Mengsteab). Visit our **CROSS Training** page to learn about these great online fall courses.

God bless our ministry together!

Jon



Does your district provide a link to StudentConnect? If not, please invite them to add one!

## Events 2011... and beyond

**Challenge your faith, get equipped, promote your ministry, and more through LCMS Campus Ministry programs and resources!**

### Student Mission Challenge

Campus ministry workers: now is the time to plug your key student leaders into LCMS Campus Ministry's **Student Mission Challenge (SMC)**. What's SMC? It's an intensive event designed to pack qualitative experiences in service, spiritual growth, and leader development into a single weekend. It's Underground crammed into a couple of days—plus just a bit more.

LCMS Campus Ministry and the Acts 1:8 Mission Society will host SMC 2011 October 7-9 at The Rock in St. Louis. Visit our SMC page for detailed information. Come explore how to lead the church's mission for the 21st century. (Cont. page 3)



SMC group, St. Louis, 2010

## Events 2011... and beyond (cont.)

### BikeWalkRun-Athon 2011-2012

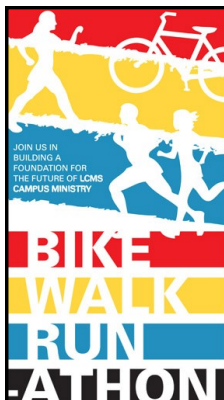
Bike, walk, or run to raise awareness and support! Want more people to know about all the great things going on at your campus ministry? Want more people to be a part of your mission to serve students and transform campuses for Jesus Christ? Then think about partnering with LCMS Campus Ministry to host a **BikeWalkRun-Athon (BWR)** in your campus community!

It's easy. First, decide as a ministry that you'll participate, set an income goal, and determine how you will apportion the funds you raise. Next, tell your favorite people how much your campus ministry means to you; explain that that's why you're participating in this event and you would love for them to help support a ministry that is so important to you. Finally, hold the event, report to your family and friends that you've earned the support they pledged, and honor your commitments to disburse the funds you raised.

In 2010, we encouraged ministries to host their **BWRs** in the fall between October 1 and November 15. You can hold your **BWR** between the same dates this fall—OR you can host a **BWR** this spring on any weekend between March 15 and April 30, 2012!

And here's a bonus for ministries who participated in 2011: we've simplified the registration process! That's just plain good news.

Visit the [BWR home page](#) right now to get started.



### Texas Underground 2011-2012

In January 2011, 25 students and leaders experienced the first **Texas Underground**, a six-day winter gathering in San Antonio that offered opportunities for witness and challenged participants to stretch their faith.

We're going back! Are you ready for the **Texas Underground** experience? Here's what you need to know:

**What:** Texas Underground Servant Gathering

**When** (2 sessions to pick from!):

Option 1: December 26-31, 2011

Option 2: January 1-7, 2012

(Texas Underground cont.)

**Where:** Mision Evangelica Luterana, San Antonio, Texas

**Who:** Students, campus ministry leaders and volunteers

**Cost:** \$275 per participant (Please note this correction to any previously published fee.)

For even more information, visit [lcmscampusministry.org](http://lcmscampusministry.org), email [campusmission@yahoo.com](mailto:campusmission@yahoo.com), or call 314-497-2400.

**Texas Underground** is presented by LCMS Campus Ministry in partnership with Can-Do Missions and the Acts 1:8 Mission Society.

### 2011 Video Contest

LCMS Campus Ministry's national **Video Contest** is back in 2011!

YOU have a great story to tell about what your campus ministry or LSF group does. Can you tell it in a video in four minutes or less?

Then enter your video in our contest! All student-made videos submitted according to LCMS Campus Ministry's published rules will be reviewed by



our panel of judges, who will select the winners. First prize will be a \$500 ministry grant awarded to the participating group; second prize will be a \$250 ministry grant.

"Last year was our first year for this, and it was a great start," says Jon Jensen, LCMS Campus Ministry executive director. "But there are a lot more ministries out there—a lot more stories to tell. We want to hear them! So here's our challenge to our campus groups: challenge each other to show what's best about your ministry—and let's show everybody!"

The 2011 LCMS Campus Ministry **Video Contest** begins September 1, 2011 and runs through October 31, 2011. There is no cost, and entry is easy. Full information can be found at [lcmscampusministry.org](http://lcmscampusministry.org) beginning September 1. Be sure to visit our channel on [YouTube!](#) And coming soon from LCMS Campus Ministry: video devotion series!

### Even more

Also coming: **Campus Ministry Sunday, Beautiful Feet Conference, Spring Break Undergrounds**. Check the calendar box on page 1 for dates!

## Michigan State groups shine the light of Jesus over spring break

Four teams from Martin Luther Chapel at Michigan State University headed south over spring break 2010 to spend a week serving others. Here's a glimpse of how they put their faith into action in Guatemala and in Phoenix, Arizona, and El Paso and Galveston, Texas.



**El Paso.** Ten students traveled to El Paso, Texas to serve the ministry of Ysleta Lutheran Mission by building a tool shed for a mission congregation. They began with a cement slab; when their week was up, so was the whole shed—painted and complete with sheetrock walls, a door and two windows, and electricity.



**Galveston.** A group of eight students went to Galveston, Texas to work on a servant project with partner One Mission: Galveston. They spent most of the week making much-needed repairs to the home of Mary Castro, a Galveston resident whose home had been damaged by Hurricane Ike (2008) and whose husband had passed away shortly afterward. They replaced the framing around the home's kitchen window, installed new baseboards and trim, and painted the home's exterior. They also developed a close relationship with their new friend, Mary.

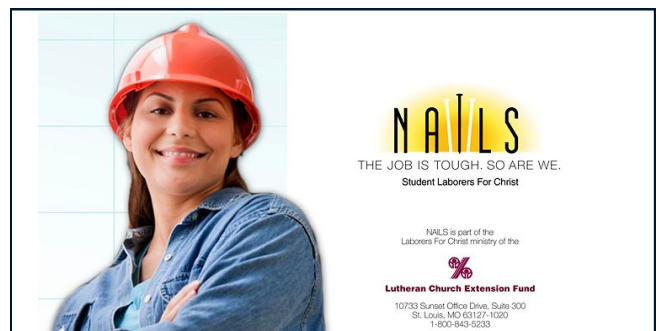


**Phoenix.** A ten-student group spent a busy week in Phoenix, delivering sack lunches to homeless people, organizing a storage facility, repairing a roof, weeding a prayer garden, and landscaping and digging drainage trenches at Habitat for Humanity work sites.



**Guatemala.** Twelve students traveled to Castillo Fuerte Iglesia Luterana (Mighty Fortress Lutheran Church) Guatemala City, Guatemala to work on a variety of construction projects—painting the church, waterproofing the church's roof, and completing construction on a basketball court (pouring concrete, putting up a hoop, and installing window protection). They topped off their work by providing a net for the basketball goal and presenting the church with an MSU Spartans basketball.

Do you have a mission/service experience to share? Give God glory and bless our campus ministry community; send your story and your pictures to [campusmission@yahoo.com](mailto:campusmission@yahoo.com)!



## Change how you do Christmas: Conspire

Maybe this looks like I'm jumping the gun a little bit—a Christmas-related article in a summer newsletter? Really? Well, stay with me; it seems to me that now is exactly when we should be having this conversation.

I learned about this thing called Advent Conspiracy a couple of years ago. Perhaps you've heard about it too; it's not a Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod program, but the LCMS' Family Ministry office actually plugged it in a newsletter in 2009 and some congregations have decided to participate in it. Here's what the Advent Conspiracy is: a Christian movement intended to take back Christmas by refusing to become slaves to commercialism and focusing on Jesus instead.

Seems like a good idea, don't you think?

The Advent Conspiracy's message is simple: let's do Christmas differently; let's try to get to the heart of Christmas. Instead of going along with America's \$450 billion-dollar annual buying frenzy and loading up friends and family with gifts they don't need and won't use, why not spend fewer of your dollars and more of yourself for the ones you love—and celebrate the freedom that gives you to worship the One Who changed our eternity?

At Advent Conspiracy, they say it this way: "Worship fully. Spend less. Give more. Love all."

What's it look like to join the Conspiracy? One young guy I know hand-knitted scarves for his closest friends and made other unique, personal gifts for his family. Then he calculated



Image from Official Movie Trailer, copyright 2010 Blue Like Jazz The Movie LLC

### Be a film critic

Well, it's all very mysterious, but according to the blog on its website, the movie *Blue Like Jazz*—based on the book by Donald Miller—will be released this fall ([bluelikejazzthemovie.com/movie-info](http://bluelikejazzthemovie.com/movie-info)). We'd like to publish one or more reviews of the film. Interested? Email us at [campusmission@yahoo.com](mailto:campusmission@yahoo.com).



Screen capture from Advent Conspiracy's 2009 promo video

how much he hadn't spent—and donated most of that amount to Advent Conspiracy's partner charity, Living Water International, to help people in the developing world have clean water (BTW—clean water for the world: a comparative bargain at just \$10 billion).

What else can joining the Conspiracy look like? A Christmas-season lunch with a friend. An afternoon baking cookies with a grandparent. A hand-made card that says how you really feel. Free babysitting. Playing the Faces game with a nephew or niece at your nearest photo booth. A selflessly helpful act. Anything that genuinely tells your recipient, *This is how much you mean to me and I didn't want another Christmas to go by without letting you know.*

When you figure out how much you're saving, get creative. Go in with everybody in your campus ministry or LSF group; pool an amount of what you've all saved together and provide it to Living Water International; to Lutheran Student Fellowship or LCMS Campus Ministry (two of our favorite causes!); to all three; or to the cause(s) you choose to witness to (don't forget your own campus ministry!). Use Jesus as your guide; nobody, ever, was better than He was at this.

See why I wanted to bring this up now? If it resonates (I think it will), it will take some time—maybe a whole semester—for some folks to work up the courage to break free of the Ghost of Commercial Christmas Past. You'll have to come to grips with this question: Will it be worth it? (Here's a hint: *only if you want to change the world.*)

Visit [adventconspiracy.org](http://adventconspiracy.org) now to learn more. Be sure to watch the 2009 promo video and the 2008 video titled "Enter the Story."

*Oh, come, let us adore Him.*

*Greg Koenig, a BSEd graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and an MA (English) grad of the University of North Texas, has served as national LSF Facilitator since 2010. He's the coordinator of LCMS Campus Ministry's annual Video Contest and a few other things.*

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You can also support us by visiting [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) and selecting **Lutheran Campus Mission Association** as the charity of your choice!

## Prayers and Praises

- Join us in praying for students, faculty, staff, campus ministry workers and volunteers, and national campus ministry leaders as a new academic year gets underway.
- Pray that many are blessed through the student training, service and fellowship events planned for the coming year; pray also for safety and strength for everyone involved. Pray, too, for guidance for all those who are considering professional church work as a vocation.
- Give thanks for another successful summer in Lutheran Church Extension Fund's **NAILS** Student Laborers for Christ servant/employment program! Pray for the program's continued success.
- Give thanks for the mission heart of Concordia LSF in Pullman, Wash. The group received a ministry grant as first prize in the 2010 LCMS Campus Ministry Video Contest—and decided to donate it to support the national work of LCMS Campus Ministry! Campus ministry coordinator Ann Summer-son wrote in their letter to us, "Being able to send the (video) link to incoming students has given us a whole new, very visual and friendly way to describe what our campus ministry at Concordia looks like." We praise God for the special gift of being able to work with Concordia and all the great campus ministry and LSF groups out there!
- Ask God to bless the ongoing selection process for a National Pastoral Advisor for Lutheran Student Fellowship. Ask Him also to guide and bless the election of new officers for LSF.