

Building the Future of Campus Ministry



Rev. John Lund

In the midst of my 17th year as the ELCA campus pastor in Missoula, I find myself in deep gratitude for

the abundance of partners, friends, students, staff, congregations, faculty, and alumni that are part of or connected to our community. I am also grateful to be in a full-time position with a strong board of directors, solid staff, and two renovated houses that are paid and clear.

Years ago, we may have expected to see a similar version of an ELCA campus ministry at every larger state school across the country. However, with the shrinking of denominational resources it has become harder to hold these ministries intact. In my time here in ELCA Region 1 (the Northwest) we have seen campus ministries drop from full-time to $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ time at Montana State, Eastern Washington, Idaho, Washington State, Western Washington, Washington, and Oregon State. Our campus ministry at Oregon has always been part-time. This means Emmaus is the only campus ministry in the region still holding at full-time.

Montana State and Washington are trying to get back to full-time,



and hopefully Oregon State as well. However, once a ministry drops from a full-time staff person, it's hard to get it back. It's also very hard to recruit for a part-time position from among pastors or professionals who are equipped for this work, looking for a long-term run in campus ministry, and would consider moving across the region or country to do so.

Local boards and synod offices may end up having to be creative by yoking a campus ministry with a local congregation, or finding someone (usually local) willing to work in a part-time capacity. In those situations the work of campus ministry often gets reduced to providing the baseline of weekly programming such as a meal, worship, and/or conversations for a community of students. Having a

weekly gathering of students is still worth our investment and great things will happen and come out of those groups for sure.

However, having the stability of a full-time staff and a solid board gives us the possibility for so much more. We've had the resources to bring in part-time administrative staff to help with bookkeeping, publicity, fundraising and outreach. This has given us the time to go after vocation and leadership grants which give us the ability to hire student leaders and bring on graduate students and seminarians for internships and practicums. We have also had time to build trusting relationships with faculty and staff in numerous departments across campus and with congregations and non-profit organizations in the community.

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Emmaus Food Pantry

*Bridget McDonald, Emmaus
Resident and AmeriCorps*

We are applying for an ELCA World Hunger grant that would fund Emmaus to open a fully stocked food stand and host a number of educational cooking classes for students and community members. Food insecurity among college students is all too common and this grant would give us the opportunity to use our resources and energy to address this issue.

Our hope is that this food pantry will be a discrete and convenient option for students and community members, making it a stigma-free and accessible location. Additionally, we would offer educational classes on a

certain food or cooking topic. The classes would also help make connections within the community while strengthening relationships.

Food access is important, but so is knowledge surrounding all things food and cooking. The goal of these courses is to help people find an appreciation for new forms and ideas about food and allow others to share their talents with the group. Our hope is that this project will involve the community as a whole and ignite excitement surrounding food and knowledge, while reducing barriers for people to have access to food. Please feel free to reach out if you have anything you would like to share with us about this project!

Faith and Climate Action

Madeline Stevens, Coordinator

On November 10, 2021, Emmaus Campus Ministry, in partnership with the UM Humanities Institute, Faith and Climate Action Montana, Environmental Studies, and Environmental Philosophy, presented a panel of graduate students titled "Future Leaders Striving for a Livable World. Graduate students from Environmental Philosophy and Environmental studies talked about their backgrounds and what they hope

the future of the environmentalist movement will look like. From prepared questions and audience questions, the panelists made it apparent that while there is grief surrounding the climate crisis, there is also a level of hope and resiliency that comes from the younger generations now in control of the future of the planet.



Emmaus Campus Ministry is a ministry of ELCA Lutherans in partnership with the United Church of Christ, Episcopalian, and Methodist churches, welcoming of all perspectives. We are a Reconciled in Christ Ministry, meaning we welcome and affirm all orientations and gender identities.

Confluence: the Moment of Meeting and the Movement Forward

Rebekah Cochran, Seminary Intern

Confluence has grown from a creative possibility into a living community! Since the beginning of October a vibrant group of leaders have been planning and envisioning Confluence Gatherings with the intention of each being a moment of meeting and a movement together into the future. As two rivers come together, there is something holy that happens in that moment of meeting. It is dynamic, powerful, and creative. So too are our Gatherings! We have been singing, praying, hearing and telling stories, and reflecting in the silence of our own being and in conversation with one another. All of these things are done with purpose, to nourish the deep parts of ourselves and to connect our own spirit with our neighbor's spirit and God's Spirit.

But at a river's confluence the water that meets doesn't just stay in one place. It flows forward together, becoming and creating the future of the river. Through the relationships we build within the Confluence community we are called to be in relationship with all of Creation. The soul nourishment that we receive during Confluence Gatherings gives us strength and inspiration to meet the challenges, joys, and complexity of our lives and the world.

So much about Confluence is meaningful to me, but two things in particular stand out. I love music and singing, so making music together each week fills up my joy tank, for sure. When we began gathering, many of the songs were new to the group. The piano leading us was beautiful but the voices underneath were quiet

and unsure. As the weeks have gone on, the singing has become stronger and more confident. It has been beautiful to not only see and feel, but to hear our community coming together!

In traditional Christian settings, the stories we tell are almost exclusively from the Bible or from a pastor.

At Confluence we have been expanding the stories we tell and whose stories we consider sacred. Because at the core, if we believe that each human being is created in God's image and each member of Creation is a reflection of the Creator then aren't all of our stories sacred? Some weeks we read poetry, some weeks we hear the stories that are on the hearts of those who have gathered, some weeks we tell the ancient stories of Scripture, some weeks we invite the wisdom of scientists or artists into our midst, and some weeks we listen for the stories that come to us through shared silence. Because of this reimagining of sacred stories, I have started to listen for God's story intersecting with my own and with the stories in the world around me. It's made me interact with others with more care and helped me to think about myself as a member of other people's stories, too.

I am excited for the future of Confluence and am full of gratitude for all those who have been a part of creating this community in the past few months!



Thanks for Supporting Virtual Oktoberfest!

We are grateful to our donors and sponsors and everyone who participated in the online auction and program. We feel blessed by your support and look forward to our next in-person celebration!



(Building the Future of Campus Ministry continued).

All of this has given us the infrastructure and capacity to have imagination, creativity, and the ability to take on projects and opportunities as they present themselves. When the Presbyterians decided to sell their half of the Ark, we were able to mobilize, raise funds, and renovate to build up our low-rent, student communal living community. When our Muslim friends were being slandered and threatened, we were able to help start, host, and staff the group SALAM (Standing Alongside America's Muslims) which provided numerous educational, connection and community events. When a few folks persistently asked how faith communities might engage and respond to climate change we were able to help start and sustain the group Faith and Climate Action. When Casey Dunning started an MSW practicum with us and asked if congregations would be willing to work together with non-profits to address community needs, we were able to use our relational connections and time to help start the building of the Missoula Interfaith Collaborative and now Common Good Missoula. When young adults in town yearned for a different way of being church, we provided the support and organization to start the action/learning lab of Confluence, now in its third iteration.

Over the years there have been many educational, organizing, community service, and justice seeking opportunities such as these, both on campus and in the community, that we have been able to say yes to. Today we continue to live into a partnership with the Wesley House board to expand housing and program, provide leadership in Common Good's Wrestling with the Truth series, provide opportunities for AmeriCorp, seminary and graduate student leaders, and provide safe space for all students including LGBTQIA, doubters and seekers looking for a faith-based affirming community. Today, we have the infrastructure and ability to take on new grant applications, imagine new projects and be ready when students show up with a concern or idea they want to pursue.

When you support Emmaus you are supporting this larger network of students, leaders and community projects, as well as the capacity to build, grow, and be ready for the next possibility to come our way. I am so grateful for all of you who support us and keep this campus ministry vibrant and alive! My hope is that we can also build a plan for sustainability, so that this ministry of support, creativity and possibility will be here for generations to come.

A Reflection on Giving

We are so grateful for our network of supporters across the country! In this season of gratitude, we offer our thanks to those who give monthly, offering continuous support of Emmaus. Emmaus alumnus Pastor Kevin Beebe shares why he gives monthly:

"Sometimes the world, especially the church world, feels stuck in a rut. The days go past in a haze of work projects and meals. It is really tough for me to see the new life that is bubbling up, life that God's Spirit is bringing forth into the world. The prophet Isaiah envisioned a new creation springing forth, wondering aloud if we can perceive it; a future of justice, grace, and mercy. I give to Emmaus financially because it retunes me to seeing God's new Reign breaking forth all around me.

I see that Reign breaking forth at Emmaus. I see it in the ways the community seeks justice in Missoula. I read about the ways faith is growing anew in the fresh soil of the hearts that participate and rejoice.

And I think I begin to perceive what Isaiah was talking about and the prophetic people being raised up at Emmaus who will live it out. Giving monthly to Emmaus is easy because my gift becomes a thanksgiving to God for all the new life that will change the world—new life that begins at 538 University Ave. It makes me feel humbled to be part of a regular giving community which saw that new creation bubbling up long before I was a student, saw it in me when I didn't, and which continues to see God's beginnings in all those who participate in the life of Emmaus Campus Ministry."





Wrestling with the Truth: Connecting Head to Heart

Lars Anderson, Seminary Intern

I was fortunate to participate in Common Good Missoula's Wrestling with the Truth of Colonization this fall. There were nearly one hundred other participants in this training from churches, unions, and non-profit organizations. As a seminary intern, it was exciting to see the collaboration happening across denominations and secular organizations in the work to create a more equitable life for all people.

The Wrestling with the Truth series consisted of five sessions that were designed to help participants understand the realities of how colonization has impacted indigenous people. Additionally, participants were given time and prompts to help them reflect on how they have been directly impacted by colonialism.

Although the entire experience was meaningful, a particular session of this series impacted me more deeply than others. This session focused heavily on Minnesota history and current events in relation to interactions between settlers (non-indigenous residents of Minnesota) and the indigenous people of Minnesota.

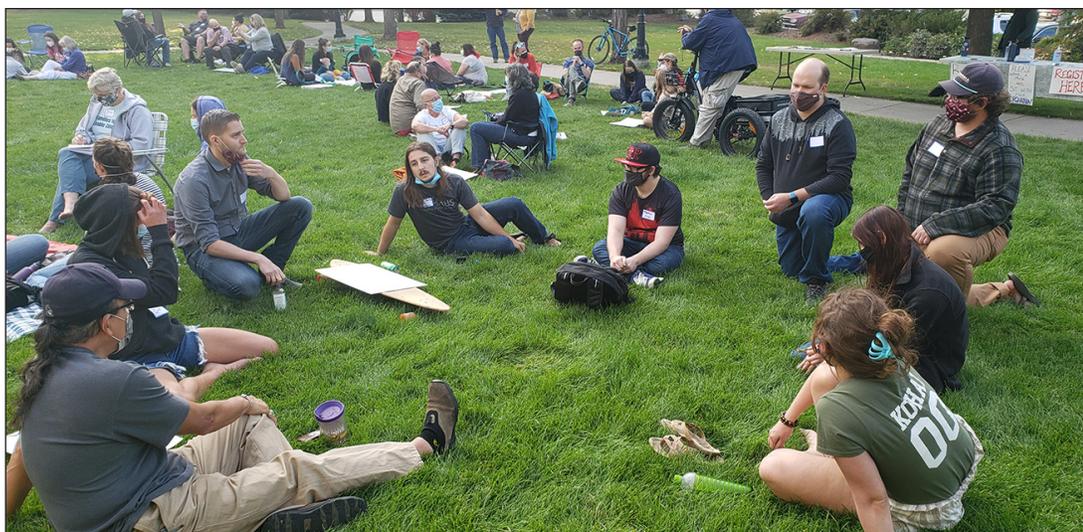
In school and through relationships, I had previously learned about each of the events that were discussed. I already knew about the thirty-eight Dakota men that were hanged in Mankato, Minnesota in 1862. I already knew about Enbridge's Line 3 pipeline that was largely being constructed across reservations despite ongoing

protests from water protectors.

Knowing was my problem. As a young person in Minnesota, I was fortunate to have high school teachers that are ethnically Ojibwe. I took a number of American Indian Studies courses at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. Last year, I had the opportunity to work with the Northeastern Minnesota Synod's Together Here ministry which is led by a Deacon who is Ojibwe. I came into Wrestling with the Truth with a fair amount of pre-existing knowledge and experience working with and learning from indigenous people.

Again, knowing was my problem. Going through Wrestling with the Truth helped me to understand how I have intellectualized the impacts of colonialism on my life and on the lives of other people that I care about. This experience helped me to connect my head with my heart and feel the feelings I had previously repressed in relation to settler and native interactions. With the support of my group members, I was able to feel the anger, sadness, and grief that I had initially felt when I first learned about these harmful events and systems. I hope to continue to allow myself to feel as I keep wrestling with these issues.

Wrestling with the Truth of Colonization was an uncomfortable but great experience. I found hope in learning alongside people from a variety of different backgrounds in order to learn from the past to shape the future. This future is rooted in love and care for all beings. I am excited to continue wrestling, collaborating, and dreaming about how we can make this future a reality that benefits all.



Emmaus staff and students attended a Common Good Missoula community organizing rally in September. Pastor John and others spoke about the power of organizing and how it makes a difference in people's lives.

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Goodbye to Emmaus

Ben Peterson

I've been living at Emmaus since June of 2018. As I write this, it's starting to dawn on me...has it really been close to four years since I moved here? I've got so many things coming to a head these days, but this is probably the most tangible one. I've been here summers and winters, upstairs and down, heck, I was even in the other building once. This is a community the likes of which I don't think I'll ever find again, and that's incredible.



I'm currently studying Elementary Education here at the University of Montana, and I'm coming up on the student teaching portion of the curriculum. I'm doing that with my 7th Grade science teacher in Spokane so I'll be relocating soon. I'm looking forward to that and what comes after, but I'd be lying if I said that I wasn't going to miss Emmaus. I know that everyone says this about where they live, but this place brings out something in people that you really don't find anywhere else. There's a feeling of connectedness and camaraderie here, and now at the Wesley House too, a feeling that we're part of the same thing, and that thing is bigger than the sum of its parts. Maybe that comes from the shared garden, maybe it comes from the meetings, and maybe it's through figuring out who's going to mow the lawn, but whatever it is and wherever it comes from, I'm glad that I was able to participate and live and grow in it for these past few years. Thanks Emmaus. I won't forget you.