

Lutheran Campus Ministry – Ithaca:
A Mission “On the edge; in the midst; with a center”

The ELCA and its Upstate New York Synod are committed to walking faithfully together with people in the context of higher education: students, staff, faculty.



In the Southern Tier Conference such a campus mission is engaged in Ithaca through the faith community known as St. Luke Lutheran Church.

St. Luke serves people connected with 4 campuses (Cornell University, Ithaca College, Tompkins-Cortland Community College, and SUNY-Cortland) as well as people not directly connected with any of those campuses. St. Luke is called to teach, preach, and embody the Good News: that we are One in our baptisms into the death and resurrection of Jesus. To that extent we are neither Big Red or Bomber, neither male or female, neither Republican or Democrat, Progressive or Conservative, engineer or linguist, hotelier or architect, veterinary student or business school student, ROTC member or lacrosse player.



All those are images, labels, or identifications which we bring to this faith community. But God calls us to a mission based on our foundational identity of being a beloved and baptized child of God, graced and freed to see and serve our neighbors. God calls us to be One community, diverse in our identity and gifts, yet grounded in our common identity.

God nurtures and forms people in that identity through worship, study, conversation, fellowship, and service. Students exercise their leadership and are formed in their deepening faith by sharing their God-given gifts and talents through the many ministries that are part of St Luke: church council, committees, task forces, choir, instrumental music, outreach, campus leadership, student discussion groups, church school, mentors for catechetics, and more. One of the keys is cross-generational settings and opportunities where the baptized of all ages can be mutually strengthened and formed in faith.

Upon graduation these students who have shared in St. Luke will be distributed through-out the church to form faithful participants and leaders for now and into the future.



This campus ministry is a mission ‘on the edge, in the midst, with a center’. It is ‘on the edge’ because God’s Word is countercultural to many campus gods and ways. It is also ‘on the edge’ because the church in the context of campus meets the current culture, ways, concerns, tools. A campus-related ministry can share that learning experience for the benefit of the whole church.

Campus ministry is ‘in the midst’ as it journeys with people where they are: library, dinner table, practice field, physical training session, classrooms, recitals, plays,

residence halls. Even 'in the midst', campus-related ministry is present 'with a center': God's Word of Law and Gospel, a challenging word to some out-of-bounds situations and really Good News for those who despair, are failing a class, experience a breakup, an illness, a family issue, grieve a loss or think they are not good enough for a variety of reasons.



If you visit this campus ministry, you will not find a full church, nor full classrooms, nor a full offering plate. We have our realities and challenges. We pray you will encounter people who have more-full lives and are faithfully wrestling with what God's call and gracious centering, Good News identity mean for their lives and for the world God forms them to serve.