



An Appeal from LCMS Campus Pastors/Workers For University Lutheran Chapel in Minneapolis

Easter Wednesday
27 April 2011

We have watched what has transpired this past Holy Week with great sadness, because we revere and cherish the mission and ministry that has and is taking place through University Lutheran Chapel (ULC) in Minneapolis. ULC is one of the oldest and most respected campus ministries in the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS), and is nearly financially self-sufficient, no longer even receiving program subsidy funds from the Minnesota South District (MNS).

We are disturbed that now, after ULC has used these facilities for over 60 years with no interruption imposed on it by the MNS District, they have been informed that their gathering place may be taken away. This proposal has taken place without conversation, and with virtually no warning to the ministries it directly affects. It is even more disheartening because such a course does not even appear necessary as ULC's net cost to the MNS District is less than \$15,000 per year.

As those who are actively engaged in campus ministry across the Synod, we cannot see how such an action is in the best interest of students at the University of Minnesota (U of M), or conducive to any future plan to support campus ministry throughout the MNS District. Ultimately, we believe that the sale of this property would be an absolute and genuine tragedy.

ULC has served as a long-standing model of campus ministry to everyone engaged in campus ministry. The breadth of its influence and legacy has been made publicly known by the outcry of support that it is receiving throughout the Synod. ULC's presence at the U of M is not only an important witness to Lutheran and non-Lutheran students alike, but also to all of us who are co-laborers in ministry to students on the campuses we serve.

We are concerned that:

- Plans to expand campus ministry might include the sale of District buildings where the desired campus ministry is already successfully taking place.
- Communication in this matter has not been open and transparent, especially in consideration of the magnitude and irreversible nature of the recommended action.
- In the last three years, ULC has had to endure the scrutiny of not one, but two, District campus ministry task forces pursuing the sale of the property, even though the first one recommended that the building not be sold at that time. (Campus Property Task Force Report to the Minnesota South District Board of Directors, 20 April 2009)
- ULC was not informed of the MNS Board of Directors (BOD) decision to establish the latest campus ministry task force, nor was she included in any of the task force's discussions, or even consulted before their recommended plan was presented.
- The MNS District Mission Committee that has now made the recommendation to sell this property to the BOD did not honor the following agreement it made with ULC: "When the Missions Committee will be discussing a major issue or making a decision which will affect ULC, the Committee will notify ULC of the issue prior to the meeting at which it will be discussed/decided." (Ministry Understanding and Agreements established by University Lutheran Chapel and the Minnesota South District, revised 13 November 2008)
- The only input that ULC has been permitted in this matter was the chance to react to the plan at the very meeting at which the Missions Committee received the Task Force recommendation, and decided to recommend the sale of the property to the BOD.

We believe that:

- Campus Ministry property in prime locations on, or near, our nation's campuses should be the last thing that is sacrificed for the sake of new and untested models of campus ministry, especially when the properties are already paid for.
- While more congregational involvement and support is always helpful and even necessary where campus ministry is not already taking place, the fixed location of campus ministries in close proximity to the campuses they serve remains crucial and desirable for outreach to college students.
- The influence of any campus ministry extends far beyond the changing boundaries of any one District, as students attend universities - especially one like U of M - from all over the country. There are surely many students at U of M also from the Minnesota North District and countless neighboring districts.
- The sale of the property at the U of M would mean that there is virtually no way for the MNS District or the LCMS to ever own property again on the campus of one of the largest universities in the United States, in one of the most historically Lutheran states in America.
- While the property associated with ULC may, or may not, be valuable on the open market, one cannot attach a price tag to what will be lost. No one doing campus ministry today can afford the price of such a location; neither can anyone afford to sell it.

We encourage the following:

- Find healthier solutions by including representatives from both full time campus ministries of the MNS District, allowing them to participate in discussions that affect their future and contribute positively to discussions aimed at the planting of other campus ministries elsewhere in the District.
- Seek the wisdom and experience of those engaged in campus ministry throughout the Synod, especially those who do so in similar contexts to those within the MNS District.
- Learn how campus mission and ministry have been impacted by the sale of similar property elsewhere in the Synod.
- Consider what other assets the District can sell, or programs it may cut, so that it can continue to promote the confessing of Christ on the campus of the U of M.
- Separate the discussion of the two properties in question from the plans to expand campus ministry so that each can be fully evaluated independently and in consideration of the unique contexts involved.
- Harness the good will and concern expressed from throughout the Synod over this matter in developing a plan for campus ministry that the larger church can wholeheartedly embrace.

While we work in a variety of campus ministry contexts, both large and small, we all share a great passion for the young people of the church and a desire to see them grow in their faith, rather than lose it, while on the secular campuses of our country. We also desire our Synod to maintain a bold presence on our nation's campuses so that many who do not know Christ might also be brought into His church.

We thank God that, for the better part of a century, God's people have laid a foundation for campus ministry in our Synod, including the purchasing of properties and the erecting of churchly chapels for the purpose of presenting a bold witness to Christ on our college campuses. We believe that we should honor their sacrifice and the stewardship of the resources they gave for such purposes. ***We should not fund the moment, at the expense of the future, while dismissing the past.***

While we realize that these types of facilities are no longer being built on our nations campuses, those that we already have are worth maintaining. They serve as vital outposts for the Church, especially as she embraces the Synod's "Witness, Mercy, and Life Together" mission emphasis. In fact, they can be flag bearers of such a mission emphasis:

- Giving **WITNESS** to the Word of God in its truth and purity in the midst of the post-modern and pluralistic collegiate square,
- Showing **MERCY** to a college culture that has lost its moral moorings, and
- Keeping the youth of our Church engaged in **LIFE TOGETHER** during a pivotal and transitional period in their lives.

Many campus ministry models have come and gone over the years, but mission outposts like ULC have grown and thrived for decades precisely by keeping their emphasis where it ought to be, serving young people faithfully with the means of God's grace, and giving them a church home away from home.

We implore the MNS BOD not to make such a decision in haste, without exploring the full - and irreversible - ramifications of its actions, even as we ask the whole Church to support all the campus ministries of our Synod, for the sake of the souls of young people entrusted to our care. It is for their souls that we labor, and for whom we covet the Church's continual prayers and support.

Rev. Jonathon Bakker

Christ the King Lutheran Chapel,
Mt. Pleasant, MI (Central Michigan University)

Rev. Duane Bamsch

Evangelists' Lutheran Church, Kingsbury, TX
(Texas State University & Texas Lutheran U.)

Rev. Timothy Beck

Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, Richmond, CA
(University of California - Berkeley)

Rev. Peter Bertram

Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Chadron, NE
(Chadron State College)

Deaconess Sara Bielby

University Lutheran Chapel, Ann Arbor, MI
(University of Michigan)

Rev. Dr. Mark J. Buchhop

Wittenberg Lutheran Chapel, Grand Forks, ND
(University of North Dakota)

Rev. Christopher Burger

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Columbia, SC
(University of South Carolina)

Rev. Charles B. Burhop

Saint Barnabas Lutheran Church, Sault Ste. Marie, MI (Lake Superior State University)

Rev. Daniel Burhop

University Lutheran Chapel, Boulder, CO
(University of Colorado)

Rev. Theodore Cook, Sr

Zion Lutheran Church, Pittsburg, KS
(Pittsburg State University)

Rev. Stewart Crown

Trinity Lutheran Church, Palo Alto, CA
(Stanford University)

Rev. David Dissen

Lutheran Chapel of Hope, Cape Girardeau, MO
(Southeast Missouri State University)

Rev. James Douthwaite

Saint Athanasius Lutheran Church, Vienna, VA
(George Mason University)

Rev. David Fleming

Our Savior Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids, MI
(Grand Valley State Univ. & Calvin College)

Rev. John Frahm III

Gloria Christi Lutheran Church, Greeley, CO
(University of Northern Colorado)

Rev. Robert Franck

Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Duluth, MN
(University of Minnesota - Duluth)

Rev. Joshua Haugen

Ebenezer Lutheran Church, Greensboro, NC
(University of North Carolina - Greensboro)

Rev. Mark Jasa

University Lutheran Chapel, Los Angeles, CA
(UCLA)

Rev. Brandon Jones

Saint Paul's Lutheran Church, Long Beach, CA
(Cal State University - Long Beach)

Rev. Donald Jordan

Redeemer Ev. Lutheran Church, Chico, CA
(Chico State University)

Rev. Kevin Jud

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Hamilton, OH
(Miami University, Ohio)

Rev. Kevin Martin

Our Savior Lutheran Church, Raleigh, NC
(North Carolina State University)

Rev. Philip Meyer

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Terre Haute, IN
(Indiana State University & Rose Hulman
Institute of Technology)

Deaconess Shaina Mitchell

Grace Lutheran Church, Muncie, IN
(Ball State University)

Rev. W. Max Mons

St. Paul's Lutheran Chapel & University Center,
Iowa City, IA (University of Iowa)

Rev. Terry Naasz

Mount Calvary Lutheran Church
Brookings, SD (South Dakota State University)

Rev. Samuel Needham

Concordia Lutheran Church, Vermillion, SD
(University of South Dakota)

Rev. David Nehrenz

Trinity Lutheran Church, Norman, OK
(University of Oklahoma)

Rev. Dr. Larry Nichols

Our Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church,
Smithfield, RI (Rhode Island College,
Providence College & Brown University)

Rev. Ian Pacey

LSF at University of Arizona
(University of Arizona)

Rev. Ralph Patrick

& Parish Worker Reena Samper

Peace with Christ Lutheran Church,
Fort Collins, CO (Colorado State University)

Rev. Thomas Reeder, Jr.

Apostles Lutheran Church, Platteville, WI
(University of Wisconsin-Platteville)

Rev. Derek Roberts

First Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN
(University of Tennessee)

Rev. Michael Scheer & Augusta Mennell

All Saints Lutheran Church & Student Center,
Slippery Rock, PA (Slippery Rock University)

Rev. David Schoessow

Christ Ev. Lutheran Church, Superior, WI
(UW-Superior; WI Indianhead Tech. College)

Rev. Stephen Schumacher

Bethany Lutheran Church, Naperville, IL
(Various Area Colleges)

Rev. Floyd Smithey, Jr.

Our Savior Lutheran Church, Columbus, MS
(Mississippi University for Women)

Rev. Dr. Douglas Spittel & Rev. Eric Andrae

First Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church,
Pittsburgh, PA (University of Pittsburgh,
Duquesne, Carnegie-Mellon, and others)

Rev. Sherman Stenson &

Rev. Dr. Mark Nuckols

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Austin, TX
(University of Texas, Concordia University)

Rev. Christian Tiews

Grace Lutheran Church, Tulsa, OK
(University of Tulsa)

Rev. John Wegener

College Hill Lutheran Church, Cedar Falls, IA
(University of Northern Iowa)

Rev. Dr. Kenneth Wieting & Rachel Ploetz

Luther Memorial Chapel & University Center,
Shorewood, WI, (UW - Milwaukee, Marquette
University, Concordia University Wisconsin, &
Wisconsin Lutheran College)

Rev. Jay Winters

University Lutheran Church & Student Center,
Tallahassee, FL (Florida State University)

Rev. Richard Woelmer

University Lutheran Church, Bloomington, IN
(Indiana University)

Rev. Bernie Worral

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Fargo, ND
(North Dakota State University)

Rev. Marcus Zill

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church & Campus Center
Laramie, WY (University of Wyoming)