

# The LuMin Austin Times

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## LuMin Bumps Up Advent for First “Christmas Eve” Together



Austin, TX -This year, the LuMin Austin worship community bumped up the four Sundays of Advent and celebrated Christmas Eve on December 8th. LuMin was just doggone tired of not being able to observe all of Advent together. Not to mention Christmas Eve!

“It’s a pretty empty feeling not getting to sing ‘Silent Night’ together,” lamented LuMin campus pastor, Brad Fuerst, “Plus the observation of Advent as a time of preparation, repentance, and hopeful anticipation resonates deeply with what the average college student is going through at this time of the semester.”

You can check out scenes from LuMin’s Christmas Eve by simply scrolling all the way to bottom.

Students have been promised (forewarned) that not only will there be ample carols to sing together, but there will be an impromptu Christmas pageant couched within worship. As always, if you’re in the area and able, you’re more than welcome to join us!

## Dia de Muertos Observed at LuMin



Rachel Rivera '22 (L) and Bianca Blaney (R) '20 by the ofrenda.

This past November 1st marked the first year that LUMIN started a Día de Muertos Tradition! Día de Muertos is a special day in Mexican culture because it is a day in which the life of our deceased and what they left behind is celebrated. A day where it’s not about praising or mourning the dead but rather remembering and taking time to breathe and remember that we have such little time in this world, and we should truly cherish every moment we live.

This year, Kit, Bianca, Travis and I made an Ofrenda (Offering) for our loved ones. More than bringing my Mexican culture, I am ecstatically amazed and grateful at how we created a space where this community was able to connect with the memory of their loved ones in their own way.

Speaking as a Latinx, LuMin’s Dia de Muertos observance has opened a new home for the Latinx community on the 40 Acres! It meant a lot to me for the LuMin worship community to have a tradition close to me included. I’m grateful and excited to see how Dia de Muertos has led to more Latinx students seeing LuMin as a faith community they can be part of!

-reported by Rachel Rivera, '22

## LuMin’s Connection with Community First Continues

LuMin continues to volunteer with Community First Village this semester, and we had a great time doing it.

In the past, we have gardened, swept, and landscaped for this amazing community of formerly homeless people. This semester’s presence among them was no different. We dug up rocks and transferred them. Our students also helped add topsoil to the sides of several homes to reduce erosion.

We continue to learn a lot about what it means to live in community from Community First residents. Through the kindness of those who live and work within the village, we encounter God’s Grace.

- reported by Anna Bardenhagen, '22



L-R: Anna Bardenhagen, Madison Brenner, Natalie Jaacks, and Nathan Blank

# Reflections from our LuMin Student Interns



Madison (L) and Natalie Jaecks '22, learning how to make challah for the Daily Bread Food Pantry

My internship with Daily Bread – LuMin's food pantry run by students for students - has not only allowed me to be more fully present in LuMin's Sunday evening worship, gatherings, and activities, it's also been the most meaningful and impactful work I've ever done.

Previous to this internship, my work conflicted with things going on at LuMin. Now, I get to be present among the LuMin community, and my work makes a difference in the lives of my fellow students every week.

When we launched Daily Bread this past spring, we – the students - made it our mission to serve the 1 in 4 UT students facing food insecurity. We also felt called to decrease the stigma surrounding hunger so prevalent on today's college campuses.

I really enjoy serving as a welcoming presence to people and trying to reduce the stigma around food insecurity. I and the student volunteers I recruit are intentional about making Daily Bread a non-judgmental place where students can feel comfortable getting what they need.

The connections I make each week and getting to hear how Daily Bread has made a difference in my fellow Longhorns' lives make me so excited to show up each and every week.

God has had a huge part in turning Daily Bread into what it is today; it gives me joy to be able to show others the grace and love God has shown me in my life.

- Madison Brenner, '21

## A Sabbath-ful of Tea



Rebecca has sabbath down to a tea with students (front to back) Haley Grosenbacher, Ashli, and Rachel Rivera

This semester, LuMin's Spiritual Director, Rebecca Guengerich has introduced students to the spiritual practice of taking Sabbath via Tea Time. As students sample and sip a variety of teas, students are invited to pause: tiny little sabbaths amidst their frenzied schedules.

"I like Spirituali-TEA..it's a brief time during my day spent with Rebecca and other friends that completely turns my day around," says Rachel a frequent tea sabbath participant. "I can just relax and reflect on what I do and why I do what I do in my day to day life." Musing over her sabbath tea time with students,

Rebecca states, "As God enters in through the water of tea, we watch the tea open up. Just as tea leaves break open in the water, we too begin to open up to new movements of God in our lives... The conversations and community sustain and support our students and then they are sent on their way renewed and blessed.



Kit (L) and family at a UT football game... Hook 'em!

As the Building Bridges intern, I've felt the transformative impact of connecting my faith community with marginalized communities in need of love and attention.

Earlier this semester, LuMin collaborated with the Gender and Sexuality Center (GSC). The GSC was in need of clothes for students that have been disowned by their parents and in need of resources. My siblings at LuMin donated 156 articles of clothing; and in so doing, played a hugely significant role in the GSC's clothing drive.

I've also worked - patiently and gently - to connect LuMin to the University League Initiative to form an allyship with DACA recipients and undocumented peoples alike. I'm beginning to see a beautiful connection between our two communities, but it's a delicate process. Building trust with this community is key.

I think the most amazing initiative I spearheaded this past semester has been LuMin's observance of the Transgender Day of Remembrance (observed on Sunday, November 17th - which was also our 2nd Sunday of Advent).

Our worship community designated the GSC's Trans Crisis Fund as our offering recipient that Sunday. Our students contributed \$631 toward this fund! I cannot overstate the impact this had on the GSC and the students who were present when I presented the check.

I'm so grateful for the opportunity to serve LuMin as an intern, to help our community to come together in service, to spread kindness and love, and to remember the great teachings of the Christ we follow.

I cherish getting to know my fellow marginalized students: interacting with them...seeing their smiling faces...witnessing their realization that they're loved and there is a space and community (LuMin) for them when they need it most.

- Kit Caudle, '21

## PUC Team India: My Faith in Action

My faith and major have led me to being a part of a wonderful program at UT called Projects with Underserved Communities (PUC). This program brings engineering and social work students together to develop solutions for communities in need, around the world.

I'm on "PUC Team India," and we're working towards building a community center for an ostracized small rural village in Southern India. Through this work, I see my mechanical engineering major intersect with Christ's call to love our neighbors – most especially those who are marginalized.

This center will provide the community with shelter, a place for medical treatment, an area for education, and a location for marriage ceremonies. Throughout this school year, we will be designing the building and fundraising for it. Next summer we will travel to India to help implement the building.

We're currently in our fundraising phase and are trying to raise \$17,000 between November 6th and December 6th. Anyone interested in finding out more information about our project or who'd like to make a contribution, is invited to visit <http://hornraiser.utexas.edu/pucindia2020>.

- Britta Dalton, '21



# Scenes from LuMin's "Christmas Eve"

