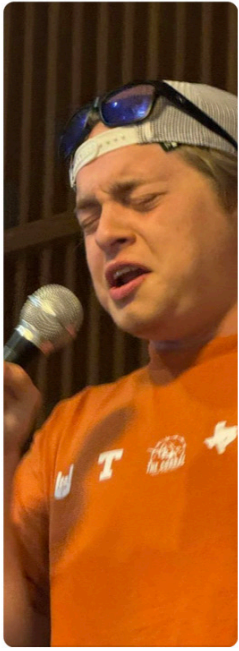


From Lunches to Karaoke: Creating Life-Giving Community at LuMin



Michael Kell, Camilla Ugaz, Shannon Perry, and Virginia Vanicek getting their Karaoke On!

- by **SHANNON PERRY**- Senior, The Kacie Brekhus Community Life Intern, majoring in History (pictured below)

I write this final article as a kind of love letter to my time as the Kacie Brekhus Community Life Intern - a calling I've served for the past three years! This internship has evolved from a ministry of outreach and connecting with interfaith organizations and students to fostering a sense of belonging and community within LuMin's congregation. This shift in the social life of LuMin is something I've hoped for since my freshman year.

Having this internship opportunity: actually getting to play a role in community building and creating lifelong friendships while doing it has to be one my most rewarding experiences while at UT.

Last semester, we decided to rebuild our social activities at full force following the pandemic. The community's desire to know one another on a deeper level inspired "LuMin Lunches." (See The LuMin Austin Times, Volume 6, Issue 1). Every two weeks, members of LuMin were randomly paired with another member to connect on a deeper level. While lunch is in the title, people have gone for walks, coffee, or Texas Athletic games together.



Having this structured time to interact with people that we have seen during worship for weeks strengthens the bond that we have both independently and as a community at large.

This increased connection encouraged us to shift toward LuMin-sponsored group socials. Each month of the semester, LuMin hosted a casual gathering to enjoy each other's company.

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We began with the ferocious intensity of a Mario Kart game night. Josh Smith took home the crown as the best player in our bracket, and has since earned unwavering respect from everyone present. Before Spring Break, we all celebrated with a board game night playing revealing card games late into the night with pizza and eighties music sustaining us. We closed out the semester with karaoke. This final hurrah featured dead-pan arrangements of classic pop songs, performances that rivaled their on-screen inspiration from *Barbie* and *A Star is Born*, and cheers from fellow students walking past the space at 2100 San Antonio.

Building community within the worship community is the goal of my internship, and I am so ecstatic to see the growth of friendships blossoming at every turn. LuMin is a comforting place that allows each of us a space to engage in conversation, learn more about God, and eat wonderful food. We cannot go through college alone, so in building upon the relationships at LuMin, I hope that God will carry these friendships throughout our lives.

Dreaming of a Way Forward... Tailgate Tuesday and Beyond

- by **ASHLYNN ALTHAUS**- Senior,
Volunteer Coordinator Intern majoring in
Architecture and Architectural Engineering

As many of our dedicated readers of the LuMin Times know, here at UT Austin, we at LuMin do a little something called Tailgate Tuesday. Every week on Tuesday, the students at LuMin, with the help of our friends and family at local Lutheran (and Methodist!) congregations, feed burgers, tacos, or pancakes to 400+ hungry Longhorns.

Tailgate Tuesdays can be a spiritually fulfilling way to live out God's call to feed the hungry and love our neighbors in our little corner of the world. Be that as it may, Tailgate Tuesdays can also be exhausting.

LuMin is a whirlwind of activity from 3:00 pm when prep begins until 8:00 pm or later when clean-up finishes. A small but mighty crew of students and our campus pastor have risen to this challenge week after week, but the signs of burnout became apparent. Turns out feeding 400+ fellow college students can be a pretty heavy lift.

What do we do when following God's call becomes more of a chore than a score? How do we balance our desire to fulfill Tailgate Tuesday's core missions (food and fellowship) while being full-time college students?

This past March, I brought these questions to one of our weekly staff meetings. Pr. Brad received our questions and concerns and determined that it might be good to bring in someone beyond our immediate community to facilitate a conversation.

With the help of LuMin Board Member, Pastor Drew Ingram, we sat down and had an honest conversation about Tailgate Tuesday and began to formulate some ideas. In order to make our vital feeding ministry sustainable, we have a plan in place to broaden UT student volunteer involvement, provide Tailgate Tuesday sabbaths each semester, and provide Pr. Brad support with the addition of a new Tailgate Tuesday Quartermaster student internship position.

Conversations that provide space for lament and frustration are seldom easy, but it was powerful for me to see how God is palpably present-most in these kinds of moments. And by having God present and moving in that conversation, we end this year hopeful that LuMin's feeding ministry future is both bright and sustainable.

Scan QR Below to see LuMin Seniors, Owen and Camila, slay @ the SWT Synod Assembly!



Food Pantry Sees Surge in Demand: Adapts to Meet Student Needs



- by **JODIE NGYUYEN**- Junior, The Loren & Kay Jensen Daily Bread Food Pantry Intern, majoring in Computational Biology

As the student intern serving Daily Bread, LuMin's West Campus food pantry here at UT, I've witnessed a dramatic rise in demand over the past semester. This influx of students needing assistance presented me with a significant challenge: how to meet everyone's needs while operating on a limited budget and preventing food waste.

Throughout the semester, I became a bit overwhelmed by the demand. Long lines formed, only for some students to reach the front and find essential items like milk, produce, or bread depleted. This was disheartening for everyone involved - the students who left empty-handed and myself. All of us want food insecure Longhorns served by this pantry to have access to the food they need.

Determined to address this disparity, I conducted a comprehensive survey of student needs. Based on the results, I revamped our inventory, prioritizing essential items and eliminating non-essentials to maximize resources. This meant stocking more staples like milk and eggs, expanding our fresh produce offerings, and streamlining our inventory for better space utilization.

The initial shift presented logistical hurdles, but we quickly adapted, implementing new ordering procedures for smoother operations. The impact has been amazing. Students who previously struggled to access essential items can now find them readily available, even during late-night visits. More importantly, we've been able to move away from a "supply limited" service to one that prioritizes Daily Bread's advertised hours and reliability as a food source for hungry Longhorns.

Introducing: LuMin's 2024-25 Student Interns!



Top to Bottom/Left to Right: **Jodie Nguyen** - *Jensen Daily Bread Intern*; **Ellie Sievers** - *Worship Musician Intern*; **Virginia Vanicek** - *Teinert Social Justice Intern*; **Josh Allen** and **Isabella Garcia** - *Kacie Brekhus Community Life Interns*; **Corrie Jarrett** - *Bohls Donor Care Intern*; and **Johnny Zor** - *Tailgate Tuesday Quartermaster Intern*.

UT's DEI Cuts and LuMin's Response

- by **VIRGINIA VANICEK** - Sophomore, The Carl and Claudia Tienert Social Justice Intern, majoring in Astronomy

This past semester, UT administration implemented Texas Senate Bill 17 (SB 17) by eliminating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs on "the 40 Acres." Our worship community supported one such DEI resource significantly: the Women's Community Center (WCC), formerly known as the "Gender and Sexuality Center," but changed to the WCC in an effort to comply with SB17. We had hoped to continue our partnership with the WCC.

At the beginning of the semester, LuMin donated a year's worth of student offering (\$2,300) to the WCC. Through a few lunches together with

WCC student interns and the director we were enjoying a stronger bond between LuMin and the WCC. Anticipating challenges created by SB17, Pr. Brad and I offered LuMin's support to the WCC and other potentially displaced groups known to the WCC.

Unfortunately, UT staff cuts in April included the WCC director; the students served by the WCC will no longer have access to the center come this June. LuMin grieves the loss of the WCC and its vital support for marginalized students; we're now working with other allied campus ministries to provide space for these students next semester.

Musical Collaboration to Serve God



LuMin's Lenten "Prayer around the Cross."

- by **ELLIE SEIVERS** - Senior, Worship Music Intern, Violin Performance and Radio, Television and Film

In planning worship for Lent this year, Pastor Brad and I decided to have services that provided students with the opportunity to contemplate, meditate, and give alms through the practice of "Prayer Around the Cross". Knowing the musical talents of our congregation, I took this as an opportunity to get my peers involved in providing music for worship. While students went to the cross, lit candles, and prayed, my peers and I provided reflective background music.

One time, Jimmy O'Brien (senior) and I collaborated on guitar and piano respectively on a few Taizé songs, and another time

Corrie Jarrett (freshman) and I put together a flute and violin duet. I'm always grateful for the opportunity each Sunday to be able to use music to serve God, and it was truly special to do so with my LuMin family during Lenten season.

I also had the opportunity to collaborate with a worship musician from the Episcopal Student Center during our first ecumenical Easter Sunday Dinner Church hosted at LuMin. While all of us come from different backgrounds, these collaborative efforts truly spoke to the power that music has to unite people together - in this case, in praising God's name.