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IGNITE is the official publication of LCMS Campus Ministry, a Recognized Service Organization serving The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and dedicated to the campus mission field.

*LCMS Campus Ministry equips leaders to make disciples who make disciples on campus.*

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## More Underground, more outreach

As you read this, the second round of LCMS Campus Ministry's **Underground** servant gatherings is set to begin. **Texas Underground**, held January 2-7, offered more than thirty students, leaders and ministry staff members opportunities to serve and reach out with the love of Jesus in a San Antonio community (read more on p. 4). In March, three **Spring Break Underground** gatherings will aim to do the same in three locations.

Here are the things you need most to know about the upcoming Spring Break Underground gatherings:

1. **Registration will close this week for Spring Break Underground 1** (March 6-11, Oxford, Miss.)! There is still room and you can register through Wednesday, March 2. Visit our [registration page](#) now.
2. **Spring Break Underground 2**, March 13-18, **has been relocated from Orlando, Fla. to San Antonio, Texas**, to continue the ministry begun at **Texas Underground**. We are extending the deadline to register for this event also. If a Texas location suits you better than Orlando, please consider joining us in San Antonio! *We already know you'll love it* (read more about **Texas Underground** on p. 4)!
3. **Spring Break Underground 3**, March 20-25, is set to proceed as planned in Orlando, Fla. The registration deadline of Sunday, February 27, has also been extended.

A **Spring Break Underground** FAQ page is now available. We hope this will answer most of your questions, but if you have additional concerns, please use the handy form we've provided to ask.

Don't wait! Register now. We hope to see you at **Spring Break Underground**—in Oxford, San Antonio, or Orlando!

**Texas Underground** and **Spring Break Underground** are presented by LCMS Campus Ministry in partnership with [Can-Do Missions](#) and the [Acts 1:8 Mission Society](#).



At **Texas Underground 2011**, 25 students, along with leaders, staff members and volunteers, worked to reach out to families, children, and disabled adults to support the ministry of a start-up church. Read how they "widened the circle" to welcome new friends in the community, p. 4.

# Comments from the Executive Director

by Jon Jensen

**Spring Break Underground** registration is wrapping up for the three different venues available in March. We want to take a moment to thank our partners, church workers and local pastors in San Antonio for joining us in support of a successful **Texas Underground** event (from which the **Spring Break Underground** events were born). They include the Acts 1:8 Mission Society, led by Rev. Randall Wilken, Can-Do Missions, led by Pat Fick, and the host church, Mision Evangelica Luterana, led by Pastor Julio Flemenco and his wife, Deaconess Maricela, with support from Vicar Aaron Goeke. Of note are the campus folk who are rejoining us after a successful experience at the January **Texas Underground**.



Executive Director  
Jon Jensen

Our online classes began this semester (on March 7th) with Stacey Swan and we note that three of the courses also specific to ministry on campus will commence in late March with Rev. Mark Jasa, Jeremy Lotz and Rev. Matt Canaday as your presenters. All of the courses will be archived, providing "anytime" use options for students and leaders.

## Campus Missionary Volunteers

In January we invited a group of campus leaders from around the country to participate in an online interactive conference concerning a student volunteer year (we are calling it **CMV**, for **Campus Missionary Volunteer**, at this time). Pastor Dan Prugh had earlier in 2010 submitted a proposal of this concept to World Mission and then to LCMS Campus Ministry. We invited leaders to participate based on discussions and recollections of some of our community of past interest in this kind of concept. I have to say that the group of nine or ten left that first online "meeting room" quite enthused by our discussion.

A smaller group was asked to continue putting together additional details of the concept for a Fall 2011 pilot. We are confident in completing these details and will have a [new website area](#) devoted to this idea which will include sample budgets, etc. in a few weeks. Basically, the concept includes the following (subject to revision, of course):

- **Campus Missionary Volunteer** candidates will be interviewed first by a committee from LCMS Campus Ministry, then by local campus ministry. Reasonable background checks, references, etc. will be included in this process.
- LCMS Campus Ministry will provide public relations, communications and fund raising support.
- LCMS Campus Ministry will provide an umbrella type insurance coverage for the volunteer.

- The **CMV** will be expected to raise six to seven thousand dollars (three thousand by July 1) to be placed with LCMS Campus Ministry and allotted monthly during the academic year.
- The **CMV** will likely have a part-time job while engaged on a local campus; housing will be worked out with the local campus ministry providing direction/advice.
- The **CMV** will be required to take a specified number of LCMS Campus Ministry's online courses before the academic year begins.
- On July 1, prior to the academic year, the **CMV** will begin a mentoring program with the local campus ministry.
- A certification program would be available following the academic year served.

Although more details are involved, we wanted to make sure this opportunity was on the table. We already expect three **CMV**'s for this fall pilot and would be happy to engage a few more should a campus group from our community be interested in joining this trial.

Keep in mind our Second Annual **Bike/Walk/Run-Athon** as you begin your Fall 2011 plans!

Do you have a story that shows the impact of your campus ministry? Please send it to us—in writing, on video...your choice. We want to share your good news with the whole church. Send your story or a link to your uploaded video to [campusmission@yahoo.com](mailto:campusmission@yahoo.com).

Blessings on your work!

Jon



LCMS Campus Ministry's  
**STUDENT  
CONNECT**  
Get your college-bound student connected  
to a campus ministry.  
[lmscampusministry.org](http://lmscampusministry.org)  
Follow the links to StudentConnect

## Word at Work: for you... for free... (for now!)

*Take advantage of a great offer to equip yourself for ministry to young adults*



In our three most recent "Update" e-letters for campus ministry leaders we introduced **Word at Work**, an exciting new concept in online learning for churches and ministries. The **Word at Work** series provides interactive courses that engage learners in vital matters of Christian life from a strong theological perspective. Because of its importance to the church, education in ministry to the young adult community is a major focus of **Word at Work**.

This spring we're offering a unique opportunity to try **Word at Work** at no cost!

Here's how it works. The first 25 campus ministries/congregations to register for **Word at Work** will have full access to all live **Word at Work** courses and all available archived **Word at Work** courses at no cost during the Spring 2011 semester. Any student, ministry leader, ministry volunteer, or other parishioner at a participating ministry or congre-

gation may take all available **Word at Work** courses... *totally free*.

At LCMS Campus Ministry, we feel strongly that the ideas and tools provided in our **Word at Work** courses will enhance, maybe even revolutionize, your day-to-day ministry among young adults and in your campus community. We believe you'll discover **Word at Work** to be an indispensable resource and that once you've experienced it, you'll want to invest in it long-term for yourself, your students, and your congregation.

Don't wait. **Word at Work** courses are going on now (you can catch up on in-progress courses by viewing archived sessions!); more will begin throughout the semester. Visit <http://lcmscampusministry.org/Word-at-Work-Series-registration.php> to see the current course schedule and register your ministry/congregation using our online registration form.

Questions? E-mail us at [campusmission@yahoo.com](mailto:campusmission@yahoo.com).

## Got NAILS?

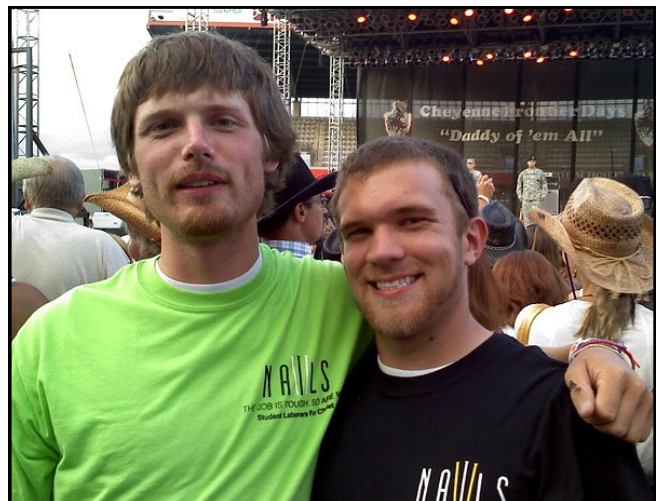
*Get ready for some summer servant work that pays*

Lutheran Church Extension Fund's Laborers for Christ (LFC) introduced the **NAILS Student Laborers for Christ** program in the summer of 2009 with 10 students recruited from Concordia University System campuses. In 2010 LFC expanded the program to include students attending non-Concordia colleges and universities. **NAILS Student Laborers** worked alongside Laborers for Christ and congregation members on projects in Gurley, Neb., Slidell, La., and Concordia, Mo.

The 2011 work season is just around the corner; students are invited now to explore a summer of service building up the Body of Christ as a **NAILS** Laborer!

**NAILS** participants work for LCMS congregations and earn minimum wage (the same as LFC workers' compensation). While LFC workers typically live in RVs parked near the construction site, **NAILS** workers are hosted by congregation families. Like LFC workers, **NAILS Student Laborers** do more than construction, typically joining congregation members in worship and other church activities.

To find out more about LCEF's **NAILS Student Laborers for Christ** program, request a brochure from your local campus ministry. You can also visit [www.lcef.org/services/nails](http://www.lcef.org/services/nails); there you'll find a comprehensive FAQ area, a downloadable enrollment form, and everything else you'll need to get started on your own **NAILS** adventure. Don't wait; check out **NAILS** now!



# Texas Underground: widen the circle

By Greg Koenig

Every morning for about an hour, and every night for at least an hour, we gathered in a circle to talk about the day's events; to talk about what in the world we were doing at this thing we were calling **Texas Underground**; to talk about eternity. As the week progressed, the circle became the metaphor for our experience here.

It was a good-sized circle to begin with. There were at least thirty of us—students and campus ministry leaders from five universities, as well as staff members from three partner organizations—and we pretty much filled the room of the fellowship hall in which we gathered. But there were often even more of us -- our host congregation's pastor and deaconess; a vicar from a local congregation; a high schooler with whom some of us made friends on a playground; neighborhood kids—and whenever we did, our response was the same: widen the circle.

**Texas Underground** was the inaugural event in the Underground series of servant gatherings introduced by LCMS Campus Ministry in 2011 for college and university students. It was held January 2-7 at Mision Evangelica Luterana, a Lutheran mission in San Antonio. The name *Underground* is intended to recall the energy and character of the early Christian church—which often operated "underground," spreading from person to person, heart to heart, family to family.

When Jesus revealed His plan for the church, He commanded the apostles to be His witnesses "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8)—describing His church as something which would spread in ever-widening circles.

This was our mission too at **Texas Underground**: *widen the circle*—and include neighborhood kids, their families, and



Undergrounders formed relationships with neighborhood kids while learning a thing or two about Ga-ga ball from them.



Undergrounders give a fresh coat of paint to an exterior wall of Mision Evangelica Luterana's fellowship hall.

those who are struggling or suffering throughout the surrounding community.

## Sonia

Pastor Randy Wilken, our facilitator at Texas Underground, tells the story of Sonia:

"Mary, the director of the local Careplex adult day care center, introduced us to a staff member named Sonia. She is a single mom with five children. She has made some poor choices in her life and as a result has not had an easy go of it.

"When we visited Sonia, she asked us just to fix the door to her shed because a neighbor keeps breaking into it and stealing her stuff. When we asked, 'What else?' she looked at us and said 'I don't deserve to have you come here and help me; that would be enough.' But we persisted, and she eventually provided us a long list. She was in desperate need—but it was her humility, not her need, that struck us.

"Sonia joined our circle at the church one night. These sessions can run long, but Sonia stayed, and as we told our stories and shared what they were coming to mean for us, she cried. She said, 'this is so different than my church, than any church that I have ever been to. Can I come to this church?'

"I have learned that since we left she has returned to Mision Evangelica Luterana to worship and to experience more of what she discovered when we widened our circle one night to include her."

## Adult Centers

Groups of Undergrounders visited Sonia's Careplex facility and another adult day care center every day, leading mu-

sic, putting on skits with the centers' participants, and just spending time getting to know them. Pastor Mark Couch, who brought a group from Western Michigan University to **Texas Underground**, writes:

"Many of the people we met in these centers could truly be considered the 'least of these' in society: men and women with some type of disability, homeless, or forgotten by their families. As we spent time listening and talking with them, we learned the joy of serving others. They impacted us as much as we impacted them."

Don Bader, leader of a student group from the University of Nebraska—Omaha adds, "Seeing Christ in everyone we talked to and being open to things outside of our own 'comfort zone' brought about results that we had not expected!"

Can the circle be widened to include people outside our "comfort zone"? Just ask an Undergrunder.

### **Unlooked-for blessings**

In fact, our comfort zones were at risk the moment we stepped into the Texas Underground experience. When Pastor Randy leads an event like this, he prefers to make rough plans, then canvass the surrounding community for specific needs, and then trust the Holy Spirit to guide which tasks are to be done and on what time line. The typically strict "servant event" itinerary many of us have been accustomed to was the first thing we learned we would have to sacrifice. Yet by our last night together, where there had been skeptics, there were now believers.

"People say they trust in God," says Jessica, a member of the Nebraska—Omaha "Living H2O" group. "We are supposed to entrust to God our entire lives, but I have never been able to completely let go before this trip. The experience of



**Texas Underground** students and leaders put on—what else?—a *fiesta* for the surrounding neighborhoods on the last night of the **Underground** event. Kids turned out for Ga-ga ball, a piñata, a great Noah's Ark skit, fellowship and prayer.

learning how to truly put your life into God's hands, and how to let the Holy Spirit guide everything you do was a priceless gift, and I thank God for it."

### **Next**

When a mission service trip ends, one thing we must—*must*—do is ask "Now what?" This ministry deserves to be sustained. The day-to-day ministry will of course be carried on—with renewed vigor—by Pastor Julio Flamenco and his wife, Deaconess Maricela, along with Vicar Aaron Goeke from nearby Boerne.

Pastor Randy and LCMS Campus Ministry have now designated Mision Evangelica Luterana to be a venue for one of three Spring Break Underground servant gatherings in 2011 (March 13-18). Pastor Randy is in fact planning to return on a periodic basis. It's likely there will be more Undergrounds here.

And the Undergrunders who were the catalysts in the process?

"Gotta have a Facebook group," they demanded on our last night together. Thanks to wireless Internet service, that task was done almost before they finished the sentence. They're out there now. They're clicking "Like" when Vicar Aaron posts that Pastor Julio was saddened by how clean—and empty—the fellowship hall is these days, and Pastor Randy responds, "Time to come back and make another mess; who's with me?"

Some will do more than "Like" an invitation such as that. They will be back, to widen the circle some more and help spread the church—person to person, heart to heart, family to family, underground, the way the early church spread.

*Greg Koenig serves as national co-facilitator for Lutheran Student Fellowship; he attended **Texas Underground 2011** on behalf of LSF and LCMS Campus Ministry.*

*For information about LCMS Campus Ministry, visit <http://lcmscampusministry.org>.*

*For information about Pastor Randy Wilken and his St. Louis-based Acts 1:8 Mission Society, visit [www.acts18stl.org](http://www.acts18stl.org). For his extended thoughts on **Texas Underground** -- and other stuff too -- visit his blog: [www.acts18stl.org/http://pastorrandywilken.wordpress.com/category/unategorized](http://pastorrandywilken.wordpress.com/category/unategorized).*

*Thanks to Pat Fick, director of our valued partner, Austin-based Can-Do Missions (<http://can-do.concordia.edu>).*

*Thanks also to all who contributed to this article.*

*An extended version of this article is available at our blog, [lcmscampusministry.wordpress.com](http://lcmscampusministry.wordpress.com).*



# Lutheran Student Fellowship

A student-led fellowship of Christian college students and a ministry partner of LCMS Campus Ministry

## More than just answering a few questions

By Rev. Jay Winters

Earlier this year, through a friend of a friend of a friend, a young grad student—let's call her Jen—got in touch with me. "I have some things that I'm thinking about, and I was wondering if you could maybe help answer some questions for me," she said in an e-mail. After a few more e-mails about schedules and things like that, Jen ended up in my office—and I realized even before we had covered the introductory part of the conversation that this wasn't going to be about "just a few questions."

Jen's mother, a devout Christian, had died when Jen was in high school. Ever since then she had been sampling the spiritual smorgasbord that was available to her; she tried a slew of Christian churches, a Jewish temple, and finally Wicca, in which she had become certified while studying abroad in England. She was a Wiccan for two years, but when she left England, Wicca grew less and less effective in calming fears that seemed to be growing in her mind and her soul. She had married a man who was moderately Episcopalian. Now Jen considered herself agnostic.

Jen told me she couldn't shake this feeling she had that there was something more to life, something beyond this life. Whatever it was, it was the something her mother had believed in.

Most of Jen's questions have been about her rejection of the reality of God and about quieting her growing fears. She has wrestled with Christian beliefs about life after death. She desires deeply to understand how and why we believe Scripture to be trustworthy (I confess this was a bit of a surprise to me; Jen is earning a doctorate in classics and mythology, a field in which the spiritual claims in ancient religious works are dismissed as legend and superstition). Jen has been approaching God, in her words, "wanting to believe, but not believing."

But not long ago, Jen confided in me, "I guess... No, I know, that I believe. I still have a lot of questions, but I'm willing to ask them from the other side of the 'believing' fence."

I'm giving God thanks for enlightening Jen and leading her to a place where she can believe, and acknowledge her doubts, and be open to the Holy Spirit's teaching. Jen and I

still have a lot to talk about. And I'm giving God thanks, too, for the opportunity to keep ministering to her.

I suppose it will not surprise anyone for me to assert that Christian organizations on the campuses of secular universities are viewed with considerable cynicism. Belief in the ancient stories of a man Who was God and Who died and came back to life clashes with so much of what is assumed to be empirical truth. *You have no business here.* That's the big picture, isn't it?

Yet how many Jens are there on our campuses—individuals who for one reason or another resist being painted into the big picture with a broad brush, who struggle with real, deep personal issues of spiritual peace, who might hear the good news in the Gospel if they just had an opportunity for a little honest conversation away from the din and distraction of the academic milieu? If the Holy Spirit is going to go to the trouble of blowing them into our campus ministries, the least we can do is keep the door open and be ready to talk—and listen.



Jay Winters is pastor at University Lutheran Church, Tallahassee, Fla., the campus ministry serving Florida State University, Florida A&M, and Tallahassee Community College; he is also National Pastoral Counselor for Lutheran Student Fellowship. You can find Jay on Facebook and follow him on Twitter.

## Chapter renewal time!

LSF is conducting its annual **chapter renewal drive** right now! We want to be sure we're able to publish the most up-to-date information possible about your LSF group—so if you have not yet had an opportunity to provide us info on your chapter and send in your chapter dues, please complete our online form (<http://lutheranstudentfellowship.wufoo.com/forms/lutheran-student-fellowship/>) or contact Pastor Jay for a PDF version! E-mail Pastor Jay with any questions you have: [pastor@universitylutheranchurch.org](mailto:pastor@universitylutheranchurch.org).

## And the winner is...

*Washington, Wisconsin groups take honors in LCMS Campus Ministry 2010 Video Contest*

This is the first issue of *Ignite* since the selection of winners in our **Fall 2010 Video Contest**, and although we announced the winners in a Leader Update e-newsletter in December, this is our first opportunity to reach our larger audience with the news!

Our first-ever **Video Contest** drew a small but committed group of filmmakers, and we appreciate the efforts of everyone who contributed to this event. Top honors went to the video "Bigger Faith, Better Friends, Best Family," submitted by Concordia Lutheran Student Fellowship in Pullman, Washington (see upper image at right); Concordia LSF is composed of students from Washington State University and the University of Idaho. Runner-up was "CUW Campus Ministry," submitted by Concordia University Wisconsin's student ministry group (see lower image at right). The Concordia LSF group will receive a ministry grant of \$500; the CUW group will receive a ministry grant of \$250.

Watch for information on the **2011 LCMS Campus Ministry Video Contest**, coming next fall. This is a great way to build community among our campus ministries—and the end product is a resource you can use to promote your ministry to various audiences!

To view this year's Campus Ministry Video Contest entries, visit our [gallery](#).



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## Prayers and Praises

- Give God thanks for a safe and successful **Texas Underground** winter servant gathering! Ask God to continue to bless our hosts at Mision Evangelica Lut-erana, event participants, and all our new friends in the surrounding San Antonio community.
- Ask God to bless our **3 Spring Break Under-ground**—to keep all participants, leaders, and hosts safe and to provide many opportunities to share God's love and widen the circle for all who are seeking answers and spiritual healing.
- Praise God for young adults who bring their questions and concerns to Christian friends and campus ministry leaders. Pray for openness and the Holy Spirit's guidance in responding to them.
- Ask God to bless our planning and development of the **Campus Ministry Volunteer** concept. Pray for the young adults who respond to the call to spend a year supporting local campus ministries.
- Ask God to continue to bless our partners in ministry, **Lutheran Student Fellowship** and **International Student Ministry, Inc.** Pray for opportunities to work in ever-closer partnership!

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