



UNIVERSITY LUTHERAN CHAPEL

10915 Strathmore Drive
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*Living
in
grace,
sharing
the
light!*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ! My name is Bart Loos and I am a Campus Missionary Volunteer at the University Lutheran Chapel at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). Recently, our congregation received an email informing us that our district decided to list our chapel building up for sale, among other ministry properties here in Los Angeles County. This is saddening and very shocking news to all of us here. This is the second LCMS college chapel to hear such news within this past school year—the first being the University Lutheran Chapel at the University of Minnesota, as many of you may know. Therefore, I am writing you with a heavy heart to raise more awareness of these chapels' situations and the other ministries in LA, briefly share about the ministry and work of this chapel, and to ask for your prayers for our chapel, the chapel in Minnesota, and the other ministries affected in LA.

We are a church family associated with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The chapel and its ministry have been serving the UCLA community since 1965. We are a spiritual home for many, including several faithful members who have been a part of the church since the beginning. We work with a full-time pastor, the Rev. Mark Jasa. Much of our time is spent evangelizing on campus and reaching out to all students with the Good News and caring for them. We also reach out to any Lutheran students attending UCLA who may not know of the chapel's existence. Those in need of a place to worship and learn and enjoy Christian fellowship will find it at the chapel. As a campus missionary, I desire to serve the unbelievers and believers alike—particularly Lutherans, since we are a Lutheran chapel. Here everyone receives the clear preaching and teaching of the Gospel, which we all desperately need.

We are located across the street from UCLA and are extremely accessible for busy college students. Also, the chapel is on the street known as "frat row." In other words, we are surrounded by fraternities. We believe that God is not bound by a physical building and that He is present wherever His Word and Sacraments are or "where two or three are gathered in His name." Still, situated as it is, this building serves as a beacon of light here at UCLA, especially to "frat row." Each church building represents where God's Grace is bestowed, where Word and Sacraments are present and received, and where believers come together for fellowship. Therefore, every church building, and in particular this building, serves as a witness.

This building also sustains our Sexton program. The chapel is home to eight students who live in the facility and commit to working and maintaining the chapel each week. They each play a vital role in the ministry and are a special gift to the ULC—and in return, the chapel not only provides them a spiritual home but also serves them by providing them a physical home. This service is a ministry, and it will no longer exist if we no longer have the building. *The loss of such a program would be the most detrimental consequence of the sale of this building.* Additionally, about thirty years ago, the then pastor of the chapel took in a homeless woman and offered her a home. She has been living here for the past thirty years. This has been her home for longer than for any of us who currently live at the chapel, and she is also a very special person to us and to our ministry.

On a more personal note: five years ago, I attended a somewhat large public university for my freshman year of college. I was the only Christian in my dorm suite and one of the very few on the



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soccer team. Therefore, my living situation and even my time on the team provided no fellowship with brothers or sisters in the faith. This was a very difficult struggle for me as I faced much adversity. I also became lost and weak during my freshman year and fell into despair, as I succumbed to several temptations. I hurt others, hurt myself, and damaged the witness of the Gospel in my living situation and relationships. It was not until my second semester that I became part of a Christian fellowship on campus, for which I was and am thankful. However, it was not a Lutheran campus fellowship, since one did not exist. What if one did? I cannot help but wonder the impact it could have had.

Similarly, here at UCLA, students may be the only Christians within their dorm, their classes, or even their major. They, too, are presented with much adversity and temptation. God has placed each of us here in the chapel as a unique Lutheran ministry within the UCLA community for the students—to provide them not just a place for fellowship, but a church within to worship. We are here for students spiritually and to build them up and encourage them in the faith amidst adverse and sometimes hostile surroundings. Each student is of immense value, both believer and unbeliever. In regard to students who are fellow brothers and sisters in Christ—we wish none to be alone through the journey of college, to fall into the pressing temptations of college (especially here at a public university), or even turn away from knowing their salvation in Christ Jesus. And in regard to unbelievers, we desire and work to care for them and to share our faith and hope in Jesus, so that they may know and realize their salvation and have hope, and also be supported during their college journey.

This is an uncertain time for us, as the ministry and witness of the building are threatened. We realize, however, that the ministry here at the chapel can still continue by His grace, and we will do all that we can to keep the ministry alive regardless of whether or not we have a building. We ask that you please pray for all of us here at the ULC, for all the students of UCLA, the ULC in Minnesota, the University of Minnesota students, all campus ministries that exist, all students, and the other affected ministries here in LA. Furthermore, although hurt and concerned by this decision, we ask that you pray for those making decisions in these districts. We are sure they have been and continue to be faced with many difficult decisions and are working to make the best ones. Many people may be angered with these decisions, but it is important to treat them and this situation with grace and understanding. Meanwhile, we will continue with our ministry here at UCLA. Though I write to you with a heavy heart, I write to you with a hopeful heart. We are full of hope at the chapel and will persevere and be courageous as we move forward during this uncertain time, trusting that God will work everything according to His gracious will and “will work everything for the good of those who have been called according to His purpose.”

May the Lord bless all of you, your church, and your ministry. You are each apart of Christ’s body. If your church and your ministry are struggling due to a similar situation or for any reason, please let us know so we can also keep you specifically in our thoughts and prayers and help make others aware of your situation. To God be all Glory and Praise.

Sincerely,

Bartholomew Loos, Campus Missionary Volunteer
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