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Showcase Talk – “Our Community: Cultivating the Outward Turn”
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Coming to Northwestern, I was adamant about not attending church. I didn't want anything to do with my faith—I had denounced it and wasn't going back, but I received an email from Deanna inviting me to Wednesday supper. I grappled with going. I thought I had turned away completely, so why was there something telling me to go. To this day, I'm not so sure why I decided to go, perhaps it was the promise of free food or some companionship or a combination of both. I'm not sure what it was, but am I glad I decided to go. Immediately when I walked in, I was met with such kindness and openness. An immediate acceptance I realized I was longing for at Northwestern. When I sat down at the table, I felt like I had found my community. Students included me into their conversations, they asked me questions about myself and my life. It was like a breath of fresh air especially considering that it was still early on in my freshman year, and I felt very lonely. While though I had told myself I didn't want to be involved in the church during college, in that moment, I knew I was going to come back. Retrospectively, I know that was God calling me back to him and pulling me to turn outwards.

I became more involved at LCM by attending Wednesday and funnily enough, after I told myself I wasn't going to attend church on Sundays, I was at Alice Millar (here) every Sunday morning singing in the chapel choir. However, I still felt like something was missing. When Deanna told me about the music director position opening up at LCM, again, I felt a pull. I could not resist this call as it was too strong, again retrospectively, I believe it was God calling me to turn outwards. It would be a lie to say that when I accepted the position immediately I turned back to my faith. I felt like a hypocrite being at church, but still questioning the text and what was being taught. My sophomore year felt lonely and riddled with doubt not only in my faith, but in my life. I didn't know which direction I was heading. What I did know is that I was becoming less and less resistant to God's call. Fast forward to now when I am trying to actively seek God's calling. I'm not perfect, but what's different this time is that I'm more receptive to his calling— I'm no longer resisting it. Turning outward towards LCM has made me realize that one of my vocations is playing music for church. Sharing music with others is what makes me feel happy and whole. Being music director here to me is more than just a job, it's something I truly enjoy and am so grateful that somehow, I ended up being right where I belong, here at LCM.

At LCM, when we sit and eat together, we turn ourselves outwards towards our neighbor. Similarly at LCM, when we turn ourselves to others and when we chose to live inside out, we see Jesus not only in others, but Jesus is seen through ourselves. Me joining LCM was not only a way for me to turn outward and see Jesus, but it was a way for others to see Jesus in me. When I think of graduating, it's me turning outward towards the world. This scares me, but it also excites me. It gives me more opportunities to see God and for me to become a source where others might find God. That's why LCM as a community is so important. Me joining this community really

helped me to look outward and consequently I have seen God through each of my peers. As I leave LCM and turn to the world, I hope to find a community like this one to support me through my faith journey, but most importantly, I hope that I can continue to strive to turn outwards.