

November 2014

Dear alumni and friends of University Lutheran Church,

We realize that some of you may be wondering “what happened to ULC?” especially as you receive regular communication and funding support requests from Lutheran Campus Ministry at Northwestern University (LCMNU). “ULC” is still the name of the congregation, but current students have embraced “LCMNU” as their new on-campus identity and organizational structure for campus ministry.

Word and sacrament ministry are central to both ULC and LCMNU, but what has become apparent is that the congregational constitution and structure (created in 1974) have become antiquated to the needs of the current ministry and have become barriers rather than a means to ministry. Currently, ULC has a membership roll of 53 people, but there are only 6 voting members, or “active” members as defined by the constitution. Six voting members cannot financially sustain this congregation nor comprise an adequate Council to lead and represent the congregation.

In May, the ULC voting members established a task force to discern the purpose and viability of the congregation. In October, ULC executive officers, the LCMNU Board, Pastor Deanna, and Bishop Wayne Miller met to discuss these concerns. At this point, ULC is waiting to hear from Bishop Miller about how it can maintain its voice and vote at synod assembly if it is no longer a congregation.

We have spent countless hours over the last year discussing what structure works best for this ministry. We love and respect the history of University Lutheran Church, and we believe in its vision. The purposes of ULC (as outlined in its constitution) include distribution of Word and Sacrament; instruction in Lutheran theology; positive responses to the “challenging and variant ideas” in the university; seeking to discover the Gospel’s relevance to the “manifold activities of the university community”; encouraging “evangelism, the works of mercy, and the practice of stewardship” in our members; and “dialogue, study, and cooperation” with other Christians and people of other faiths. We are continuing to live out all the purposes of ULC in our new identity as LCMNU. In fact, our desire to live out these purposes is exactly why a change was needed! The campus ministry structure has more flexibility, which empowers us to be the kind of group we need to be at any given time. For example, LCMNU allows students to take leadership positions while remaining members of their home congregations, a change that has transformed the ministry since we made that decision in June. The ULC constitution is impossible for us to change (because it is a constitution of the “Lutheran Church in America,” not the ELCA); the LCMNU constitution is amendable. Thus, LCMNU empowers this church – because we are, of course, still a church – to live out the purposes of ULC in a changing world that constantly challenges us to reaffirm who we are.

We appreciate your prayers as we discern the purpose and future of ULC.

Sincerely,



Philip McPeck, ULC President



Caroline Magnesen, Secretary



Burke Evans, ULC Treasurer