

Cross Currents

News and Notes for LSA Alumni and Friends
Spring 2026

Campus Changes



Zorn Arena, Brewer Hall, and Kjer Theater were taken down this year. Their occupants relocated. In the background is Centennial Hall. The area is intended to be green space as a pleasant welcome to campus.

Cross Currents

More Campus Changes



The new Sonnentag Center is the largest indoor event venue in northwest Wisconsin, providing space for large events like graduation and concerts as well as indoor athletic facilities. A partnership with Mayo Clinic includes a Diagnostic Imaging and Sports Medicine Center on the same grounds.

<https://www.thesonnentag.com/>

Cross Currents

More Campus Changes



A new academic building, situated on the former site of Putnam Hall and Katherine Thomas Hall, is well underway. The Science and Health Science building is expected to open for use in 2027.

<https://www.uwec.edu/academics/leaders-healthcare-education/science-and-health-sciences-building>

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HELP WANTED

Contributors and writers
for this newsletter!

If you're interested in
providing some content or
interviewing others for
Cross Currents, contact

Pastor Lori at

pastor@universitylutheran.org

Letter from Pastor Lori

As I write this, we are feeding hundreds of students each day for Finals Week Lunches, one of my favorite times of any semester. I am glad to see so many people know that they can come here for a healthy meal during finals, giving them one less thing to worry about this week. It's also a time of hellos and goodbyes, as students stop in before going whichever way for the summer.

University Lutheran has worked hard this year in showing up and doing advocacy work in the face of a challenging and ever-changing political climate. Our members and students volunteered for Rapid Response and Mutual Aid teams. We hosted and attended various trainings for responding to crises on campus and in our communities. We attended events where a critical mass of supportive people could make a difference in the safety of vulnerable populations. We raised money for special programs and ongoing support, particularly for our synod's Latinx outreach ministry, Neighbor to Neighbor. The Spirit is moving among us as we love our neighbor in new and important ways.

We will see some significant change at the ERC this summer. After 11 years as Newman's priest, Father Daniel Oudenhoven will be moving to a new call in Stevens Point. Newman will welcome Father Michael Klos, who currently serves Sacred Heart and St. Patrick congregations in Eau Claire, adding Newman to this collaborative parish. Deacon (soon to be ordained) Kyle Lang will graduate from seminary this spring and arrive in Eau Claire in July to serve as the pastor for campus mission. And Sean Coyle will join the staff as lay campus minister. I look forward to this new era of partnership with Newman Parish with their new leaders.

This spring marks the completion of my tenth year here as pastor. I feel very good in the call and mission of this ministry and the creative ways we approach it, as we thankfully worship God, gracefully welcome all, and joyfully serve campus and community. Thank you for your part in making ULC and LSA who we are today, from the past and into the future!

Pastor Lori

Alumni Spotlight

Zachary Rau '21

BS Geography/American Indian Studies/GIS Certificate

Hi everyone, I am sure you are wondering what I have been up to. I was a student at UWEC from September 2017 to December 2021. I was quite active during this time at ULC. At the same time, I was a member of the Lutheran Student Association (LSA) and served as an at large council member from 2018-2019 and Vice President of LSA in my last semester in 2021. I also sang bass in the ULC choir when that was still active. ULC and LSA were very important to development as young Lutheran and getting to be with intergenerational community here has served me well. I continued to attend LSA events regularly until I moved to the Twin Cities of Minnesota in May 2022. On occasion, I continue to attend ULC worship or Praise in the Park during the summer when I come back to Eau Claire.



I lived in Saint Paul for three years at an apartment complex and worked a variety of jobs in GIS, mapping, and retail. These positions were short-term stays. Living in Saint Paul was a time of discovery and realizing I needed to find a better place to live. This period of my life was extremely tough however it helped me to grow into a more mature human being.

One place that kept me going was University Lutheran Church of Hope (ULCH) in Minneapolis. I became a member of this community in 2023 and serve there as a liaison for youth and young adults on their council. Of course, I also sing baritone/bass in their choir as well and have made many friends and connections. Another monthly event that I attend is a group called Gather Twin Cities, a young adult ministry of the ELCA. This started at ULCH and has since grown to over 50 chapters across the country. Through Gather, I have met and become friends with many other young adults, and I am also becoming regularly involved in this ministry.

Recently, I now live at a much nicer apartment complex in Burnsville and commute every weekday to work. Yes, it's a drive, however I do enjoy the peace and quiet of the suburbs. I currently work at a rental company that deals with environmental and survey testing equipment for a variety of companies, public and private. My main job is being a warehouse technician, sending out orders to our clients, testing and cleaning equipment, and making sure things are working.

My current hope for ULC and LSA is that students, faculty, and community are served with welcome, love, and respect for one another, to feel safe, heard, and valued just as I was. The life of academia can be quite messy sometimes, and the Ecumenical Religious Center was always a place where I could breathe and relax after a long day of classes and studies. Having the weekly meals on Wednesdays after choir and worship was always important for me to connect, share a laugh, and know that I was on the right path. While those ways are quite different now, the community continues to welcome those who feel lost, rejected, or needing a new ministry that follows the tenets of Christ. May this continue to happen and evolve in ways that feed the yearning soul.

Alumni Spotlight Sophie DeByl '26 BA Vocal Performance

Brief intro about yourself: year, major/what you're studying, summer plans, and anything else about yourself.

Hello, my name is Sophie DeByl (she/her), I was a vocal performance major at UWEC. I love to sing, and I've had a wonderful time being a cantor at ULC. This summer I look forward to going to state parks and enjoying nature.

What is special about ULC or what has impacted you the most?

I've felt so accepted. ULC takes care of folks—despite differences. They celebrate differences.



What are you looking forward to in the fall- new semester, new job, new city, etc

I will be pursuing a master's degree in vocal performance at Bowling Green State University in the fall in Bowling Green, OH. I am excited to be a voice area graduate assistant, meaning, I will be teaching collegiate voice lessons in some capacity. I hope to be involved in multiple operas and continue to work on the skills I learned here at UWEC.

Post-graduation, I can be reached at sophiedebyl@gmail.com

CAMPUS MINISTRY

BEST WISHES GRADUATES!



Dale Anderson
he/him/his
Eau Claire, WI
BS, Professional Studies Major,
Music Minor

next: a different phase of
retirement

Elizabeth Packer

she/her
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Duluth, MN
MS Exercise Physiology

applying for jobs in the field



Hannah Schindler

she/her
St. Cloud, MN
BA Political Science
psychology minor

Continuing my work with the
Community and Economic
Development Associates in
Eau Claire



Olivia Bishop

they/them
Eau Claire, WI

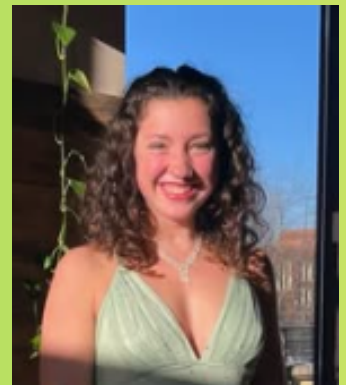
BFA Integrative Art
Latin American Studies minor



Bella Wulterkens

she/her
Kenosha, WI
BS Political Science

gap year before law school



Sophie DeByl

she/her
Phillips, WI
BA Vocal Performance

attending graduate school at
Bowling Green State University,
Ohio



Samara Gries

she/her
Grafton, WI
BS Geology (hydrogeology &
water chemistry), chemistry
minor, geospatial certificate

Master program in Geoscience,
University of Iowa



Seth Roberts

Memorial High School

Pursuing a music performance
major in piano at UW-Eau
Claire in the fall



Class Notes



Kurt Behlmer '12

Kali and I live in Milwaukee area. I have a dental practice called Good Land Dental. Kali works in budgeting for the Medical College.

Reid (5) and Jory (2) are growing fast!



Kimberly (Reilly) '09 and Wesley Ismert
Married July 17th 2023

Charlie Ismert
Born 11/29/2025
They live in Stoughton, WI



Abby Deneen '19 & Nicholas Swearingen '21.
Abby is an RN at the University of Minnesota Medical Center in the Neurology Department.

Joel Swearingen
Born 12/28/2024

Sarah Muller '20 and Kyle Root
Married March 10th 2023

Sebastian Root
Born 9/26/2025

Class Notes

Weddings:

Macy Roberts '22 and Max Carlson
Married December 28 2023

Andrew Thompson '19 and Savannah
Married September 21st 2024

Anthony Windau '19 and Riley Reed
Married November 18, 2023

Seminary:

Sarah (Muller) Root '20 will be
serving as pastoral intern at
Augsburg University and Trinity
Lutheran Church, Minneapolis,
MN.

Rev. Anthony Windau, '19, is co-
pastor of St Paul and Immanuel
Lutheran Churches, Dixon, IL.

Rev. Andrew Thompson, '19, is
serving as pastor at St Ansgar's
Lutheran Church in Cannon Falls,
MN





Contact Us

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