

# A WORD FROM

## The Well



a newsletter from  
The Well Lutheran Campus Ministry at Virginia Tech



## Community in the midst of COVID

Throughout the past 10 months, the Coronavirus pandemic has disrupted nearly every facet of our lives. College students have certainly faced a unique set of challenges as they have had to adapt to a new normal of online and hybrid classes, social distancing, and, in many cases, studying for finals from their childhood bedrooms rather than their campus libraries.

In the midst of increasing Covid numbers, civic unrest, and the 'normal' stresses of the semester, it has been a privilege to accompany The Well students as they cultivate an innovative and supportive community. This semester The Well students gathered weekly via zoom for fellowship and service hosting Bob Ross paint-nights, social justice issue teach-ins, game nights, cooking challenges, and more.

In the midst of this difficult season, our students found a renewed emphasis on worship and theological education. Students engaged in weekly bible studies that followed Paul's journey through Acts and the Epistles, learning from his example of building up the Body of Christ across distance and difficulty. The Well students have shown up for one another with vulnerability and deep love throughout this semester. The Holy Spirit has been so clearly present in the midst of these resilient and caring students, no matter how they are gathering. Thank you for your prayerful support of these students!

God's Peace,  
Alyssa Kaplan  
Campus Minister

# Burning Bush

Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.  
Exodus 3:5



Katrina Schmid '21 at a Burning Bush gathering this fall

Just as God instructed Moses when he encountered the burning bush in the wilderness, our students have encountered holy ground around a fire this semester. Named by our creative student leadership team, Sunday night Burning Bush gatherings offered students an open space for connection and conversation. As zoom fatigue grew, these safe in-person gatherings became that much more critical to student well-being and spiritual health. Each Burning Bush gathering centered around a broad spiritual or theological theme and included loosely guided discussion integrating scripture and lots of personal storytelling. Last semester our students explored themes like grief, courage, civic engagement, hope, and joy. Holy ground indeed!

# Lutheran Student Movement

**Mark Hustedt '21** has faithfully served on National and Regional councils for the Lutheran Student Movement. We are inspired by his faithful service! Here he reflects on the LSM National Retreat which took place on December 28th.

"The Monday after Christmas, several students, and alumni of The Well participated in the LSM National Gathering where they met students from across the country to share in faith and fellowship. Volunteers from all over led workshops on career exploration, the different names and identities of God, where faith fits into public service and discussing racism and oppression using a faithful lens. Fortunately for us, Reverend Lenny Duncan and Pastor Emmy Kegler shared keynote speeches about how to be an inclusive and progressive member of the church body, while affirming people of color and of the LGBTQ+ community.

I have been so fortunate to serve on the Regional and National Councils to help plan retreats like these for the past two and a half years. I developed useful skills as well as relationships with people I would have never had the opportunity to meet otherwise. I am thankful for these organizations for the opportunities I have had, and for The Well for their continued and unwavering support."



Mark Hustedt '21 and Abby Hall '22 serving at a VA Synod Winter Celebration January, 2020



Christian Lysek '21 preaches powerfully at Campus Ministry Sunday



Students enjoy a break from zoom on a socially distant hike together



Steven Schwarz '21 and Gwyn Steel '23 show off their pumpkin carving skills