

**Lutheran Student Movement USA:
Student Led, Christ Driven
Informational Packet
2008**



www.lsm-usa.org

What is LSM?

Lutheran Student Movement (LSM) is a student led, Christ driven organization that connects university and college students nationally, regionally, and locally. LSM gives students the opportunity to grow together in Christ through worship, learning opportunities, service projects, and community building. Following in the Lutheran tradition we are always exploring new opportunities in faith and reevaluating ourselves as an organization. As a united body, we provide a voice of university and college students to the larger church, and we develop students to be the future leaders of the church. LSM encourages students to meet new people and grow strong friendships and relationships. We are a faith community that encourages and supports participation at all levels of the movement and welcomes any and all students!

Nationally

On the national level LSM strives to provide members and church staff with opportunities to learn about, fulfill, and spread the Gospel in a way that is unique to the college experience. Events like the National Gathering and Breaking Out! (our alternative spring break experience) help students to grow their faiths in Christ in a safe community of believers, while offering a strong foundation in the Lutheran tradition through educational workshops, Bible studies, and service opportunities. LSM also gives students the chance to voice their questions and opinions about the hot issues in our church. Finally, LSM nationally gives students the tools to develop their leadership skills by serving on the National Council and planning committees, which mirror the structures of our Lutheran church.

Regionally

On a regional level, LSM connects campus ministries with each other, as well as with students at Lutheran colleges and schools that may not have their own campus ministries. Connections are also made with church bodies, such as synods, regions, and congregations: LSM regions have been represented at synod assemblies and events. The regional level helps students develop more personal relationships with fellow students and staff. Regional ministries are able to meet frequently because of their close geographic locations. Members at the regional level often have the opportunity to attend spiritual and educational retreats. The retreats rally students to worship together and further their knowledge of Christ. Students also engage in learning and action discussions related to social injustice, vocation, and much more. Schools within regions often meet outside of their retreats to continue to strengthen the regional community. Additionally, many regions participate in service activities and support outdoor ministries.

Locally

Local expressions of LSM vary greatly. At some schools LSM is the regional and national extension of the local Lutheran Campus Ministry (LCM). At other schools LSM is organized and recognized as an on-campus student organization. Local LSM groups can provide an outlet for worship and faith building in the Lutheran tradition. For example, at the Lutheran colleges LSM may act as another method to grow in faith and fellowship with others. Finally, LSM and LCM may exist separately at colleges as two non-competing groups with different members, but have overlapping missions.

From the Students

LSM has given me the opportunity of a lifetime, and I believe that it truly is a very critical bridge between our faith as teenagers to building the foundation of our faith for the rest of our lives. I owe a lot to my brother for inviting me to come along, and I am very thankful for LSM to allow me the chance to grow and reconnect with my faith.

-Bob Stein *Bemidji State*

LSM has meant so much to me. It has been a great opportunity to grow and share in my faith with others as well as a chance to make amazing lifelong friends and connections all over the country!

-Erin Chonka *University of Georgia*

LSM has given me a place to go to explore leadership in ministry and to continue my faith journey that only really began seven years ago. I have been an active member of LSM for only two years, but I have found I have grown a great love and connection to this organization of like-minded students from across the country.

-Tony Rhodes *Western Washington University*

A Brief History of LSM

LSM-USA was founded in 1969. Two former Lutheran college organizations, the Lutheran Student Association of America (LSAA, founded in 1922) and Gamma Delta (founded in 1928) merged to create LSM-USA in 1969 while gathered in convention in Boulder, Colorado.

In 1984, the organization Lutherans Concerned/North America (LC/NA) began what is known as the Reconciled in Christ movement. This movement seeks Lutheran bodies that are willing to declare themselves accepting and affirming of all members of the body of Christ, regardless of ethnicity, age, or sexuality. LSM-USA became the first Lutheran organization to declare itself Reconciled in Christ.

Until 1985, LSM-USA was supported and sponsored by the American Lutheran Church (ALC), the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC), and the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS). In 1985, LCMS officially withdrew its support for LSM-USA, citing doctrinal differences, primarily LSM-USA's decision to declare itself a Reconciled in Christ organization. In 1988, ALC, LCA, and AELC merged to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), thus reducing the number of official Lutheran churches sponsoring LSM-USA to one.

In 2004, LSM-USA entered into a full ministry partnership with Lutheran Youth Encounter. This partnership provides outreach opportunities for both organizations within each other's events. The ELCA continues to support LSM-USA financial and LSM-USA greatly values and appreciates their relationship with the ELCA.

What's Happening This Year

Updates from the National Council

- 1) We are looking at how to make the ELCA National Gathering of College Students more affordable, whether that is by increasing attendance, moving to an every other year gathering, or changing locations.
- 2) We have redefined our organization and developed a formal statement of who and what we are (see our "What is LSM" section), and we are now in the process of writing a new mission statement.
- 3) We are looking at whether or not to pursue options for closer alignment with the ELCA (see "Alignment with the ELCA" section).
- 4) We are refocusing our organization so that we can be relevant in today's society to our campus ministries, Lutheran colleges, and students.
- 5) We are reviewing our constitution and by-laws to make sure that they are updated and will fit with further changes in our alignment with the ELCA.
- 6) We are creating a new website apart from the ELCA server to allow more accessibility and creativity for the current council members.
- 7) We will stay true to putting out two national newsletter (online) publications per year.
- 8) We are assessing how to increase involvement in Breaking Out! or moving to more regionally sponsored weeks of service.
- 9) We are looking to establish an alumni group to provide an increased support basis for LSM.
- 10) We have created a new slogan - "Student led, Christ driven", and we will be placing them on our new brochures.



LSM National Gathering

The LSM National Gathering is an event held during winter break, usually over the New Years Holiday. The primary purpose of the gathering is to bring together the students of LSM-USA annually to conduct the business of the organization and to live, work, worship, serve, and play together as the national embodiment of this Christian community. Events at the gathering include worship, workshops, concerts, meals, dances, speakers, service projects, and plenary sessions. **This year's National Gathering is set to be held at the Westin Hotel in Chicago, IL from December 31st to January 4th.**

Typically the National Gathering is held at a hotel in a large city. The location changes from year to year. Recent locations have included New Orleans, Phoenix, Washington, D.C., Houston, San Diego, and Denver. Since the gathering is hosted in a hotel and we take pride in seeking out inspirational speakers, there is a significant cost associated with the gathering (usually around \$350 plus travel expenses). To assist students who would not otherwise be able to afford this cost, LSM offers scholarships and students should check the LSM website for applications a couple months prior to the gathering.

LSM also participates in the quadrennial "Celebrate" ecumenical gathering, organized by the Council for Ecumenical Student Christian Ministry. As Celebrate is also held over New Year's Day, LSM does not hold a separate gathering in those years, choosing instead to incorporate its gathering as part of Celebrate. The most recent "Celebrate" gathering was the 2006-2007 gathering in New Orleans.

Breaking Out!

In 2006, an annual alternative spring break opportunity, known as "Breaking Out!" was instituted by LSM-USA. This was a week-long event that consisted of service projects, theological education, social-ministry training, small group discussion, and community worship.

"Breaking Out!" was originally envisioned as three separate weeks for up to thirty students each. A challenge grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans allows students to participate in the program at minimal personal expense. The inaugural event was held in Atlanta, March 19-25, 2006.

The event is overseen by two committees of students - a planning committee and a fundraising committee. These committees are responsible not only for planning the event, but also for selecting the participants from among the applicants for the program. In order to foster a diverse community, the planning committee will generally not accept more than two people from any single college or university.

Following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, the 2006 planning committee made a pledge that the 2007 event would be held in a Gulf Coast city. In response, the 2007 planning committee chose the town of Ocean Springs, Mississippi as the site for "Breaking Out!" 2007. The event was held March 11-16, 2007.

The 2008 event, which was planned to be held in Washington, D.C., was canceled due to lack of participation. Differences in spring break dates have made planning "Breaking Out!" especially challenging. LSM is currently looking into ways to improve the "Breaking Out!" event or another way to implement a service opportunity at the national level.

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We Want to Get to Know You!

Thank you for reading the Lutheran Student Movement – USA informational packet. If you are interested in learning more about LSM and would like someone to contact you, or you are already familiar with LSM and would like to help LSM by keeping your contact information up to date, please fill out this form and mail it to:

Lutheran Student Movement
8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago, Illinois 60631-4194

To save a stamp you may also fill out this form on our website (www.lsm-usa.org). Click on the Information Packet link!

Name

Associated School

Phone Number

Email Address

Mailing Address

Appendix A

The Cereal Analogy

The following are instructions on how to make a perfect college meal, whether its breakfast, lunch, dinner or even a midnight snack. Picture the United States as one giant bowl. Then you take your favorite cereal, let's just say it is the red box of cereal with the little leprechaun on the front and it has the initials "LC" or also known as Lutherans on Campus. So obviously the next step is to pour LC into the bowl of America, because there are Lutherans on campuses all across the country. Some Lutheran students are fortunate enough to be at college with an official Lutheran Campus Ministry, and so those are the marshmallows. They are bright and colorful and scattered throughout the bowl and the actual cereal (the students) cluster around these yummy centers. However when you look in your bowl you notice that lots of the cereal is just on its own, without being anywhere close to a campus marshmallow, I mean ministry. They are scattered and separate. Well of course there is one ingredient missing...MILK! Which is just like LSM. So pour that milk and what happens, suddenly there is a substance that is everywhere in the bowl; it is "connecting all the dots." Whether an individual is with a campus ministry or not, the milk (LSM) is still there surrounding everything and binding the all the LCs together! So of course both ingredients can exist without the other, but they are so much better when they are combined to form the best college meal ever!

See our video on You Tube: <http://youtube.com/watch?v=mH4oH2zmS7U>

(LCM, College Groups)



(LSM)



(Love)

