

UNIVERSITY LUTHERAN CENTER

Fall 2011

Reflections on an Earworm of Judgment

By: Pastor Bob Chell



Pastor Bob Chell is the campus pastor at the University Lutheran Center.

“Bitch/Brag Syndrome.” That’s what a friend calls it when pastors talk about their busy schedules. He asks, “So are you bitching or bragging?” I love the way the question skewers the pomposity of those filled with self importance.

I should say, I loved it initially. The problem is this: it has become an earworm of judgment. Seldom a day passes when I don’t catch myself talking about how crazy busy my life is. To be honest, I’m usually bragging. If I didn’t like chaos, I wouldn’t be a campus pastor. Still, there are times, too many times, where my busyness is a means to avoid things I would rather not do: face myself or listen to God’s voice.

I’ve written before about the insight of Trappist monks who teach that *spiritual life deepens not by addition but by subtraction*. I put that in italics for both you and me, hoping yet again, for the courage to let go of the superficial in order to grasp the substantive.

Life has changed. Much as the industrial revolution remade society, families, and individuals, the advent of computers and cell phones have transformed, informed and deformed each of us. The churches’ response to the industrial revolution was, in part, to begin educating children working twelve hour days, six days a week. They would gather the children on Sunday mornings to teach them to read and write with the Bible as their text. This evolved into universal public education.

How have I responded to this situation in this present day? Well, a new web page, www.sdsulutheran.org, two Facebook pages, ‘SDstate University Lutheran Center’ for students, and ‘SDSU ULC Alumni’ for alums, a weekly devotion via Mailchimp and innumerable emails and text messages. Sheesh! I inflict, rather than proclaim the gospel to others, heightening their anxiety to match my own. I’m sorry, I apologize.

I know these tools are useful sometimes and, like all God’s gifts, sometimes a means of avoiding what Christ commands: “...love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Loving God and loving others is not a burden, but a blessing. A setting aside of all the ‘stuff’ and all those ‘things’ which demand much but return little. When we still our hearts, we can hear Christ’s call: “love God, love my neighbor.”

That’s an earworm worth listening to, an earworm of grace.

Top 10 list to do at the University Lutheran Center

1. Worship on Sunday morning at 11 AM and stay for fellowship at the free meal.
2. Visit Pastor Bob and chat about college life.
3. Take a ‘grace’ break for Wednesday worship at 9 PM.
4. Help out with Brookings Backpack Project.
5. Attend a Murder Mystery party.
6. Join a weekly book discussion or Bible study.
7. Worship at the state penitentiary with St. Dymas.
8. Partake in the free pancakes during finals week.
9. Study with free WiFi, cappuccino, and coffee.
10. Go on the Spring Break trip (this year we’re going to Denver, CO!).

Spring Break 2011 Trip to LA

By: Rebecca Whitlock

Many other students decide to work or party during spring break, but a select few decide to serve. Last March, twenty two students and chaperones traveled to the large city of Los Angeles, California. Going to LA was the second time I traveled with the ULC during spring break. When we arrived in LA, we met Pastor Brian, who was our main tour guide and information guru. Every morning, we met with him and talked about what we would be doing that day. Pastor Brian was an amazing person to be with during the week because of his kindness, friendliness, and humanity.

During the trip we visited Venice Beach, Santa Monica Pier, La Brea Tar Pits, Pinks Hotdogs, Homeboy Industries, Bresee Youth Center, Watts Towers, Pueblo De Dios Church, Yogurtland and many more places. There was never a dull moment throughout the entire trip because of the many service projects that the group was able to take part in. Some of these projects included handing out burritos to day workers, passing out hygiene kits to homeless people in skid row, home stays with local families and hosting a BBQ for hungry and homeless people at St. Mark's Church. While participating in the service projects, I was surprised how gracious and welcoming people were.

The LA Spring Break Trip was a remarkable time. There were so many memories, friendships, experiences and photos that myself and others were able to take away. Visiting with locals and hearing their stories was an insightful and eye opening experiencing. In some ways, the LA Spring Break Trip was life changing. Before going to LA, I would take many things in my life for granted but now I appreciate what I have been blessed with even more. Seeing and experiencing what people deal with day to day, such as undocumented day workers, caused me to be more understanding and accepting towards people.



The entire ULC group poses with Pastor Brian on the last day of the trip.



Students serving at the BBQ for St. Mark's Lutheran Church.



A youth from Pueblo de Dios Church in Compton shows off the craft he made with spring breakers at their after-school program.

New Website Offers New Way to Give

By: Tiffany Messenbrink

“Our generation...” A qualifier anybody can use, however, depending on the person making the statement it holds a host of meanings. As a child of the 90s, our generation is focused on technology and how we can do things fast and then faster. We like to speed through the drive thru to get our food as fast as possible. We want the latest model of the iPhone or Droid, as soon as they come out. We expect wireless internet to load our YouTube videos instantly. We are part of a generation wanting instant gratification, and we patronize the industries that support this.

Well, this year the ULC is keeping up! Visit www.sdsulutheran.org and witness all that’s happening. The interest sheet (downloadable on the ‘what’s happening’ page) lists 66 ways YOU can be involved.

I want to draw your attention to a page you may think is only for alumni. It’s not. In our generation, we are rich in God’s blessing and we sometimes forget that compared to the rest of the world, even a student making \$3,000 a year is wealthy, even rich. According to globalrichlist.com, a student earning \$3,000 a year is within the top 15% of the richest people in the world. We are blessed. In 2012 the ULC, will receive \$13,500 less in Church-wide and Synod support than we did in 1992, twenty years ago!

Our ministry has grown and flourished because those who preceded us continue to support the ULC. Now, our generation can help too. Because few of us carry cash to worship, the University Lutheran Center now has an available online giving option. It is now easy to set up weekly, monthly, quarterly or one time financial gifts. We are blessed to be in a generation that is always changing and creating new exciting things, but we must remember that it is also important to find something you believe in and support. We hope you’ll consider the ULC for part of your giving. We thank you for continued support to grow our ministry and keep the ULC a strong home of faith for the next generation, the next generation, and the next.

Senior Night



Pictured Here: Megan Krahn and Brittany Merriam

Last May, the first annual Senior Recognition Dinner was held. Guests enjoyed a catered meal, fellowship, and received a sweatshirt as a thank you for their years at the ULC. The seniors were also asked to make a donation to the ULC for \$20.11 (their graduating year). Twenty students attended the event.

See the back page for graduates’ advice for students.



Pictured Here: Brett Monson and Pastor Bob

Advice from Recent SDSU Graduates

- Make the most out of your time here, because once you get to our stage, (senior year) it's too late. Also, remember those who got you where you are now, make sure they know they are appreciated. -**Kyle B.**
- Take every opportunity to serve, to learn, to be in community, and to have fun because you never know what opportunity will be life changing.—**Amy H.**
- Smile and be nice. Believe that every bump in the road should be a cherished experience, and God will always provide you with enough strength to overcome it. So let go and let God take care of it all. - **Emily K.**
- A curse in verse is worse; make sure to keep a cool head when writing poetry! Seize the moment of excited curiosity for if you let it pass, it may never return and you could remain in ignorance. College is about relationships: roommates, family, books, professors. It is a time of constantly changing faces, places, and activities, but the most important relationship that grows in college is how you relate to yourself and God. - **Joe D.**
- God is great, food is good, people are fun. Stay goal oriented and fight for your dreams!- **Rebecca W.**
- Always carry a planner, know the ULC is a home away from home, and always save a copy of whatever you are working on. Remember there is always a reason for everything, so when one door closes, another will open. - **Gabrielle B.**
- Pray, every day. - **Claire M.**
- Research what college is all about including all your options to become involved. Create a list of what you want to get out of the four plus years of this life chapter and become involved in what the list outlines for you. Always keep God as your center.—**Brett M.**
- Always remember... I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Phil 4:13)- **Brittany M.**
- Go on the spring break trips! Always remember that God has an amazing plan for you. Keep your faith strong in the good times and the bad. —**Megan K.**
- Visit your professors; they are people, too. Climb the campanile at least once.—**Barbara W.**
- Get involved as much as your can. The four years will go by really fast. Remember to keep the Lord close to your heart and go to services.—**Melissa G.**
- Make the most of every opportunity you get and take time to make friends and build those relationships. —**Michelle E.**
- Always trust in God. He has a plan and it is the right plan. He will take you where you need to be.—**Elizabeth W.**
- Don't run with scissors and never pet a burning dog.— **William A.**
- Be accepting of change because it can be a very good thing. – **Justin R.**
- Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. I do not give as the world gives. Do not let your heart be troubled and do not be afraid. — **Hilaree L.**
- Make the most out of everything in college; be true to yourself and know that you always have God on your side and to turn to. – **Katie N.**

The University Lutheran Center depends on the generous donations of alumni, congregations and friends. Thank you all for your continued support! Using the Amazon link on our web page: www.sdsulutheran.org is a way to help us at no additional cost to you!

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