

THE CATHOLIC PHOENIX

ELON CATHOLIC CAMPUS MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2025

BLESSING OF ANIMALS

Father Peter blesses a pet turtle at the Blessing of Animals - a beloved tradition during Saint Francis Week at Elon.

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Father Peter shares how CCM has brought together incredible crowds during Move-In and Family Weekends.

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The welcoming community of CCM helped Monika Jurevicius '27 connect to her faith and to the Church.

6 A LIFELONG ORGANIZATION

Matt Creeron, Elon University staff, shares the continuing impact of Catholic Campus Ministry.



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Bishop of Raleigh Luis Rafael Zarama and Elon President Connie Book joined students, faculty, staff, and community members for the annual Mass of the Holy Spirit and Sunday Supper.



A LETTER FROM FATHER PETER

It's amazing to believe that we will soon be approaching 50 years of ministry on the Elon University campus. In 1977, Catholic life at Elon began as an outreach of the local Blessed Sacrament Parish, serving the growing Catholic student population at Elon. And as long as I have been here, Catholicism has been the largest faith group on campus, and our students have been leading the way!

This semester, we have seen record attendance at several of our events, including our First-Year Welcome Dinner during move-in weekend and our Family Weekend Mass & Brunch. In fact, we had to move our Family Weekend Mass to Alumni Gym to accommodate the large crowd.

At our Mass of the Holy Spirit, which is our unofficial kick-off to the academic year, we were blessed to have two honored guests in Bishop Luis Rafael Zarama from the Diocese of Raleigh and President Connie Book from Elon University. Not only students, but university faculty and staff, as well as members from the local community, all came together to enjoy the Sunday Supper that followed.

We have also had the joy in welcoming internationally renowned Catholic speaker and musician, Paul J. Kim, in September. He addressed our student body with an incredible talk about how to embrace their faith as they matured as college students and adults. That same week, Dr. Madison Chandler, Assistant Professor of Exercise Science at Elon, spoke during the university's Numen Lumen tradition and closed with a beautiful prayer from Saint Thérèse of Lisieux.

As Catholic Campus Ministry continues to serve all the students at Elon, please know that you have helped to make it happen. I am so incredibly grateful for your commitment and the commitment of so many others to the long-term faith life of our students. As Christ shares at the end of the Gospel of Matthew, "I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20), we are also committed to serving this university community, always. But we are only able to do this with your support, so thank you from the bottom of my heart.



CCM hosted a special evening with renowned speaker Paul J. Kim as he shared his "Catholic Guide to Adulthood."



Father Peter and Erin Pitman '26 offer Communion during the Family Weekend Mass in Alumni Gym.

Community:

The Heart of CCM

By Kasey Miller, Catholic Life Staff

Monika Jurevicius is a junior majoring in journalism and public health. She embodies the power of community through Catholic Campus Ministry (CCM). Growing up in a Lithuanian family in Chicago, her faith is strongly tied to her culture. But her faith was also challenged as she faced difficult questions about justice, family, and personal spirituality.

Upon arriving at Elon, Monika initially felt isolated and longed for connection. She found belonging in many areas across campus, such as the Elon News Network and being part of the Lumen Scholars program, but there was something special about CCM. Here, what began as a way to meet new friends evolved into a meaningful exploration of her beliefs. Monika connected with fellow CCM'ers through social events, but it was Father Peter's homilies that helped her connect more deeply with her faith. "I think what Father Peter says makes sense for a Gen Z mind," she shared. "He helps paint a clearer picture of the world and of faith. In CCM, I found a place where I truly belong, where my voice is heard and my journey is valued."

CCM retreats provided her with opportunities for introspection and prayer, allowing her to engage with Scripture and reflect on her relationship with God. Monika described a particular moment in Adoration at this year's Beach Retreat, "I didn't have anything weighing super heavy on my heart, so I let whatever came to mind just happen. While I was praying, I felt this warmth from God that felt like a hug. and I knew

everything I was going through was gonna be okay, and that I could let go of certain parts of my life."

Monika's perspective shifted significantly as she continued to think more deeply about her beliefs, transforming her understanding of what it meant to be Catholic. Through open dialogue and supportive community within CCM, she began to see her faith throughout her personal experiences, deepening her connection to Christ. For Monika, CCM is a place to explore challenging questions, share stories, and foster meaningful connections with others. These experiences encouraged her to support peers who are navigating their own journeys.

"I found a place where I truly belong, where my voice is heard and my journey is valued."

"I want to get to know everyone. I want to be a part of a small group, get to know the Catholic Life staff, and just do everything", Monika said with a broad smile on her face. "Community is at the heart of everything at CCM, and you just want to be a part of it."



Clockwise: Monika (bottom right) with her small group at the CCM Beach Retreat; Monika plays volleyball regularly with fellow students in CCM; Monika and others enjoy a CCM Sunday Supper.

ANNUAL REPORT OF GIVING

2024-2025

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A Meaningful and Lifelong Organization

By Matt Creeron, Director of Athletics Development for Elon University

Catholic Campus Ministry has always been a place I could call home. As I enter my fifth year here at Elon University, I'm continually grateful for the welcoming community, meaningful services, and, of course, the good meals that bring us together.

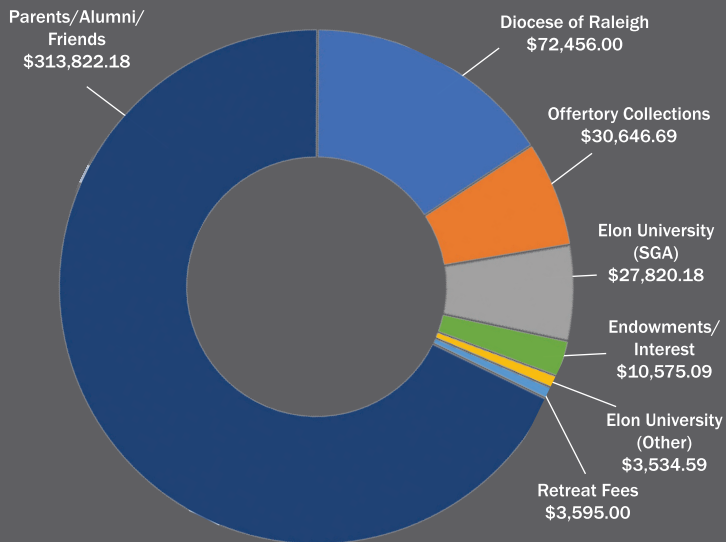
One of the things I cherish most is the chance to attend Mass right here on campus, whether on Sundays or Holy Days. You can't beat a Father Peter homily and his friendly welcome as you walk in. And after Mass, Sunday Supper is one of my favorite traditions - gathering with friends over a delicious meal and building real community.

Although I attended St. Bonaventure University for both undergrad and grad school, my faith journey has always been rooted in campus ministry. From serving at Mass as an altar server and sacristan to helping organize events that brought people together, I've seen firsthand the joy of Christ alive in community. That joy has shaped my life in more ways than one; while living in Charleston after grad school, I met my wife through a Catholic Young Adult Bible study. Faith-filled community has truly been at the heart of my journey.

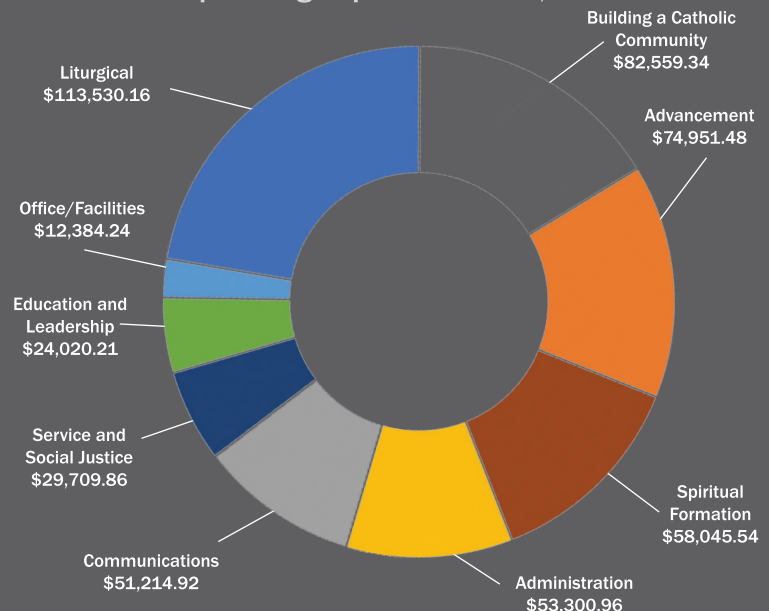
That same joy is what I see at Elon today, and it's what makes Catholic Campus Ministry so important in the lives of our students. These are some of the most formative, life-changing years of their lives, and CCM gives them the chance to grow in faith, form lifelong friendships, and truly encounter Christ.

2024-2025 FINANCIAL REPORT

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Annual Operating Expenses \$ 507,719.76



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