LIVING LIGHT, ROARING FAITH

LIGHT OF THE TIGERS



LIVING IN THE LIGHT

with
Fr. Andy Hammeke
Chaplain



FALL 2026

It's been a grace-filled start to the fall at the Comeau Catholic Campus Center. We couldn't wait to welcome back our returners and meet our new freshmen and transfers. This summer, we had more students than ever help lead youth programs all around Kansas and surrounding states. It has been cool to see new freshmen arrive and be welcomed by the same students who helped lead the summer programs they attended. It has helped them feel right at home from the get-go.

We had 4 out of our 5 missionaries from last year move on from Fort Hays. We miss them and ask you to pray for them as they move on to the next phase of their life. We are fortunate to have Anthony Kowal back for his 3rd year! He is serving as our team lead. We were blessed with 3 new missionaries, Annabelle Merten (Wichita), Rand Newton (Savannah, Georgia), and Gabriella Yanowich (Grand Junction, Colorado). All are in their first year with FOCUS. We are so thankful for the great work they are doing. Not only are they leading students to Christ, they are teaching them how to be leaders themselves. And, more than 140 students are leading or participating in Bible studies, in 20 different groups!

We decided this year to celebrate Candlelight Mass every Tuesday night as opposed to once a month. It has been beautiful to see so many students at that Mass and at all of our Masses. Wednesday nights for Catholic Tigers, we've had some great speakers like Joe Heschmeyer to answer questions about the Catholic Faith and newly ordained Fr. Luke Friess to talk about "How to Pray the Mass." We've adored the Lord and received his mercy on ABC nights (Adoration, Benediction, and Confession), and we've enjoyed community events like sand volleyball, long drive competitions, and pickleball tournaments.

Thanks to generous ranchers who provide us with healthy amounts of beef, we've been able to serve students more free meals than ever before! Free food definitely gets college students in the building, which means they aren't too many feet away from Christ waiting for them in the chapel. I'm grateful for our community members who give of their time and resources to provide these meals on Sunday evenings and for our staff, Jana and Sandy, for preparing lunch every Thursday.

Last year, we were able to bring 31 students into the Catholic Church at Easter Vigil. This year, we have even more than that signed up! The interest in joining the Catholic Church that is taking place all over the country, especially at the college level, is beautiful.

We are feeling more squeezed than ever at the Campus Center and are exploring options for building a new Church in the near future. Please pray for this endeavor!

We are so grateful for all of you and the ways you support us. Please pray that the students of Fort Hays will grow in holiness this year. As always, it is our goal to lead students to deeper prayer lives and more meaningful community so that they might not only keep their faith in college, but grow closer to Christ and establish an ever-deepening relationship that they take with them well beyond their college years.

May God Bless You,

Fr. A.J. Hamke

IGNITE

FAITH & FRIENDSHIP GO HAND IN HAND



MORGAN FREUND, SOPHOMORE, ELEMENTARY EDUCATION, KINGMAN, KS

My journey at the Campus Center began last year when I attended the back-to-school bonfire and it slowly took off from there. When I came to college, I was excited to grow in my faith and friendships. The Campus Center was the perfect place! No matter the event, I quickly figured out the people make the place. There is no better feeling than spending time with God and having faithful friends to bring you closer to Him.

In January I had the opportunity to attend the SEEK conference, and it was truly life changing. Adoration was absolutely beautiful. Being surrounded by so many faithful individuals inspired me to grow in my own faith. After SEEK, I committed to spending time in a holy hour and it has been an incredible experience. Simply being present with God brings a sense of peace that is hard to describe. As the year went on, I also began attending daily Mass as often as I could. Spending time with God has brought me so much comfort in the craziness of college.



Sharing s'mores and good times around the patio bonfire.

So far, the highlight of my year is seeing Catholic Tigers full on Wednesday nights! Seeing so many people makes me emotional because I know how much the campus center has done in my life and pray others experience the same.

Since coming to college, I have grown tremendously and have been drawn more deeply into my faith. The Campus Center has brought me some of my best friends and has become a place where I feel truly at home.

From Bible study with the girls to Mario Kart nights, from evenings spent playing Spikeball to time in Adoration and confession, this season has been full of so much joy. Rosary walks, ping pong, and conversations after Mass have created countless meaningful memories. Through it all, I've been reminded how deeply faith and friendship go hand in hand, especially at the Campus Center. Ultimately, the Campus Center is where I've laughed the hardest, prayed the deepest, and felt most alive spiritually and physically.



Morgan at the SEEK Conference in Denver, January 2026.

FLAME

REDISCOVERING THE JOY OF FAITH



SAMANTHA DIEDERICH, SENIOR, RADIOLOGIC & MEDICAL DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING, COLBY

Looking back on when I first moved to Hays for college brings back so many memories and emotions. Before arriving, I heard stories from friends about how meaningful the Campus Center had been throughout their college years. Their stories made me excited and hopeful that I might find something similar. Little did I know how deeply the Campus Center would impact my own life.

As an incoming freshman, I felt lost. For the first time, I was on my own, navigating a new environment and chapter of life.

The day of freshman move-in, the Campus Center was already hosting an event for a bonfire and hangout. I was nervous at first to go, but I am forever grateful that I did. From the moment I arrived, I was welcomed by returning students and Fr. Andy. Even amid all the chaos, Fr. Andy took the time to have a genuine conversation with every person he encountered. That simple act of making people feel seen and valued left a lasting impression.



Good friends and Tiger spirit make the perfect tailgate.

From there, I continued attending events and gatherings, meeting new people, and forming friendships. These friendships have helped me to discover

Christ in a deeper way. Through those around me, I've witnessed a genuine adoration and devotion for Christ and how His love is reflected in the way they live and care for others. Their example reminds me that faith is not simply something we practice, but something we are called to live.

The Campus Center quickly became a home away from home. More than a physical place, it has been a support system that welcomed, challenged, and walked alongside me. It gave me more than just a place to go. It gave me a community where I felt welcomed, friendships that encouraged me, and a place where I could rediscover the joy of my faith. Fr. Andy and the office staff are exceptional people that truly look after and care for all of us students.

I came looking for a place to belong, and I found a home. Most importantly, through the people God placed in my life, I found my way closer to Him.



Samantha humbly receives ashes on Ash Wednesday.

TORCH

A PLACE TO BECOME SAINTS



JACOB SCHROEDER, 2023 ALUM, FOCUS MISSIONARY, U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY

My name is Jacob Schroeder. I was a student at Fort Hays from 2019 to 2023, and I now serve as a FOCUS missionary at the United States Air Force Academy.

St. Alphonsus Liguori writes in his Letter on the Love of God, "Love seems to forget its dignity when it seeks to win love in return." Looking upon the Cross, we see this truth revealed perfectly in Christ. He willingly humbled Himself, embracing suffering, rejection, and even death, all to win our hearts. The One worthy of all honor chose to be stripped of every earthly dignity because of His love for us.



Jacob giving a talk to the Freshmen cadets.

When I first arrived at the Campus Center, I was searching for love in all the wrong places, willing to sacrifice my dignity in the hope of being loved by others. But in my first months at the CC, I encountered men and women who were seeking something far greater: the Love of Christ.

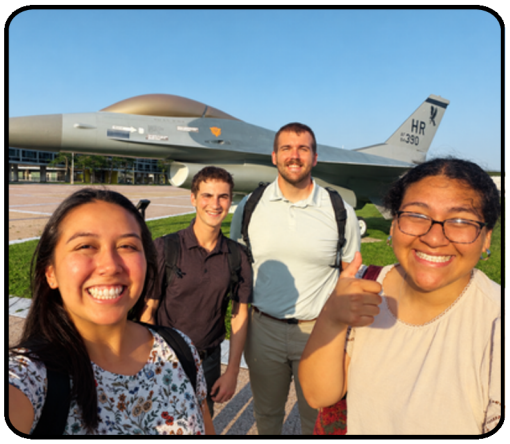
We, too, spend our lives seeking love. Yet so often, the love we pursue is worldly, disordered, and fleeting. We can sacrifice our dignity, our peace, and even our relationship with God in the hope of being loved by others.

But there are still places in our world that strive to lead us back to this true love: the love that first sought us, the love that humbled itself for us, and the love that willingly lost its dignity in the eyes of the world to win our hearts. The Comeau Catholic Campus Center is one of those places.

That, to me, is what the Campus Center is: a place of encounter. It is a place where, when we walk through the doors, we cannot help but notice the love of Christ in the room. It is a place filled with people striving to serve those around them and to give of themselves for others.

Through countless opportunities for friendship, prayer, service, and discipleship, students are given the chance to encounter the self-sacrificial love that Christ taught us so well.

I truly believe the Campus Center is more than a place where students go to have a good time. It is a place where students encounter Christ, learn to imitate Him, discover what true love looks like in this world, and are challenged to become saints!



FOCUS team picture in front of a F-16.

Ministry



Fr. Andy - Catholic Tigers Welcome



2026-27 LeadershipTeam



New FOCUS Missionaries at Welcome Night



ABC Night



Welcome Back BBQ



Catholic Tigers



Homecoming Float



ABC Night



Welcome Week BBQ

Moments



Catholic Tigers - Fr. Luke Friess, Speaker



Library Games



Candlelight Mass



Catholic TIgers Social Time



Volunteering for Freshmen move-In day



Dancing on the Patio



Spikeball Competition



Thursday Taste of Home Lunch



Food and fellowship on the patio

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FALL 2026 NEWSLETTER



#iGIVECATHOLIC
ON GIVING TUESDAY

The iGiveCatholic campaign supports the Comeau Catholic Campus Center and the many ways students encounter Christ through prayer and community. Gifts help provide Catholic Tigers events, student dinners, FOCUS Bible studies, men's and women's nights, ABC nights (Adoration, Benediction, Confession), retreats, and so much more.

Every gift helps students grow in Christ and share His light with others.

Gifts can be doubled with a $35,000 Matching Gift this year!
Watch catholictigers.org in November for more information, or contact Jana Fross at 785-625-7396 to learn how to help us maximize our Matching Gift Fund.

SAVE THE DATE

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2026