

DUKE CATHOLIC

THE DUKE CATHOLIC CENTER NEWSLETTER



**DUKE CATHOLIC CENTER STUDENTS AND STAFF
DROPPING OFF THANKSGIVING MEAL BAGS AT
THE DURHAM COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY.**



DEEP BREATH

“Jesus thirsts; his asking arises from the depths of God’s desire for us. Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him.”

– (CCC 2560)

learning the art of prayer

For some Duke Catholic students, the strange, isolating, largely-virtual semester brought with it an opportunity to plumb new spiritual depths in the midst of the pandemic.

“With a busy academic schedule, it’s easy to get caught up in stress and start to feel lost,” said Melannie Nimocks ’24. “But Deep Breath gave me the opportunity to slow down and refocus on my relationship with God before finishing out the week. It was also an opportunity for community and new prayer techniques that have helped me beyond the weekly meetings!”

With schedules somewhat freer of social engagements or extracurriculars and dorm rooms quieter and offering more solitude, the DCC saw

an opportunity for students to dig into their habit and practice of personal prayer. And what better way to help students unsure of where to begin than with a new workshop on prayer?

Launched in September, Deep Breath—a weekly 45-minute workshop on learning the art of prayer—guided students in different prayer techniques over the course of 10 weeks, with five weeks dedicated to Christian meditation and five weeks on Lectio Divina. Aimed at being accessible to newcomers, each five-week series began by teaching students the very basics and over the course of the series slowly introduced new ideas and new ways to explore the different prayer practices.



WANT TO DIVE INTO MEDITATION OR LECTIO DIVINA YOURSELF?

We recommend kicking off with the very first Deep Breath on the basics of Christian meditation!

You’ll be reinvigorated in your need for prayer, hear practical steps to aid your prayer time, and learn how to enter into the spiritual breathing of meditative prayer.

Not to mention, you’ll be led in a meditation that you’ll be able to incorporate into your own prayer routine!

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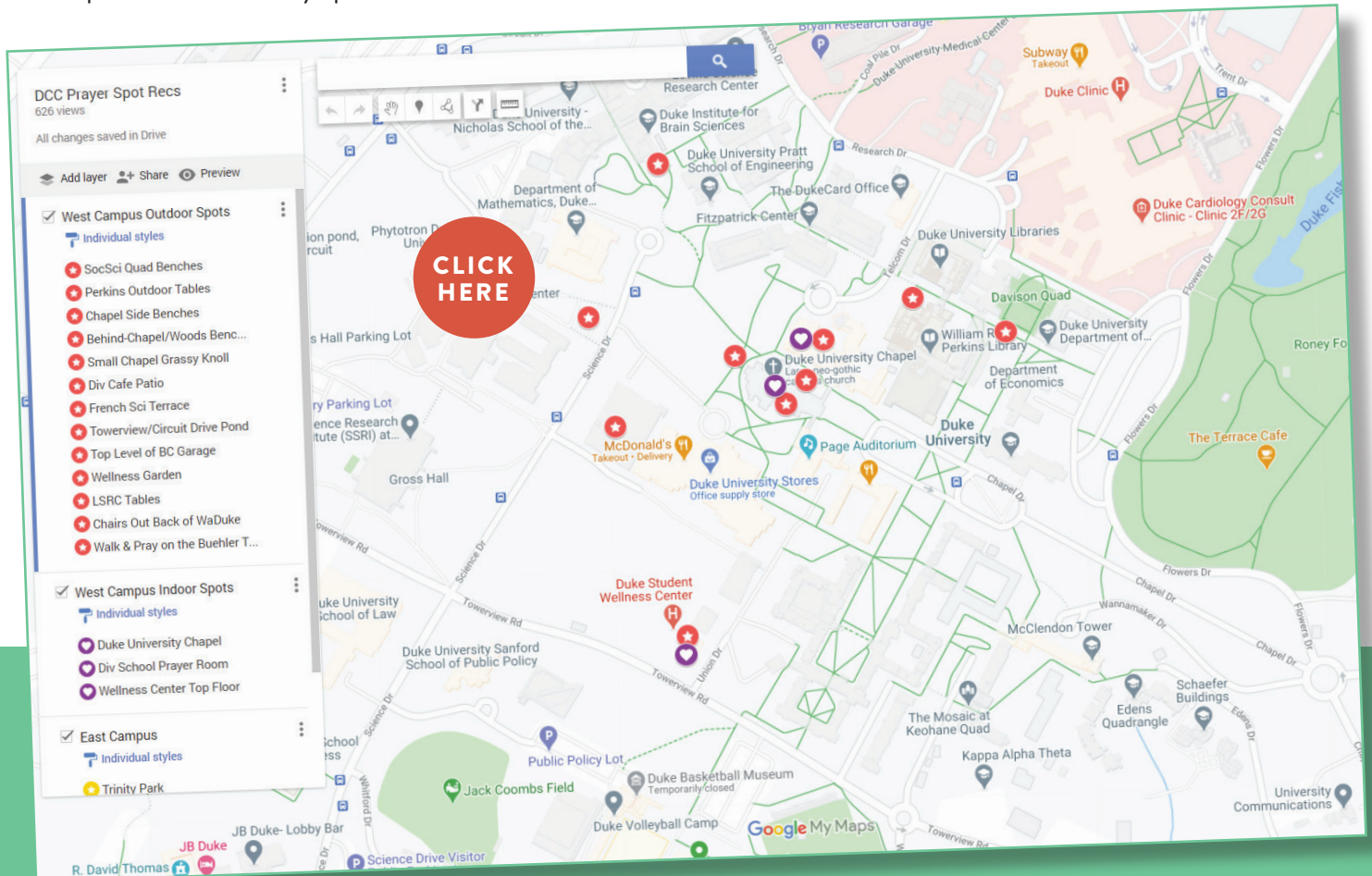
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A typical Deep Breath workshop was broken down into a teaching moment, a guided prayer experience to bring the teaching to life, and time to sit with Lord in silence at the end. Students particularly appreciated the opportunity to sit in silence and become more comfortable with the practice.

“Before Deep Breath, my way of spending time with God consisted of listening to worship music, podcasts, reading scripture, or praying with friends,” said Alexia Castillo ’22. “This weekly retreat taught me about the importance of stillness in order to become more sensitive to God’s voice. Now I’m much more comfortable sitting in silence with God and I’ve tried to incorporate this practice more in my spiritual life.”

For other students who joined, Deep Breath was a weekly opportunity to step away from schoolwork, from social media, from the news and press into a relationship with Jesus.

“Deep Breath was a really good chance for me to slow down and recenter myself each week,” said Clare Sparling ’24. “It was all a new style of prayer for me, but I think that was one of the most rewarding parts of the experience because it encouraged me to incorporate more quiet time in my prayer. Overall, I think my experience with Deep Breath taught me to make the time and space to really listen to what God is saying to me.”



MAPPING SPACE FOR PRAYER

In another initiative to supply Duke Catholic students with more tools to enhance their prayer lives, DCC staff created a dedicated Google Map for the best prayer spots on campus. Including indoor and outdoor options, as well as spaces on both East and West campuses, the map includes 21 different locations and has been viewed 626 times.

Check out the map here. Know of any great spots we’re missing? Email emma.miller@duke.edu with your favorite spot for prayer and we’ll see about adding it to the map for current students!

A MISSIONARY SPIRIT



Colette Torres '18, Luke Duchemin '18, Carine Torres '18, and Maria Luisa Frasson-Nori '18 at their DCC Baccalaureate Mass. As first-years, all four were part of the DCC's very first evangelizing small groups.



Luke (right) and fellow FOCUS missionary Gian (left) smile after completing New Staff Training in Bismarck, ND.

Just east of Hartford, Connecticut, you'll find University of Connecticut nestled in Storrs, a village within the town of Mansfield. And it's here in this small New England town that Luke Duchemin '18 has been placed as a FOCUS missionary.

FOCUS, the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, is a collegiate outreach organization whose mission is to share the joy of the Gospel and the hope of a life lived in Christ with college students. Sending missionaries to partnering colleges and universities, FOCUS creates teams of young Catholic men and women who inspire and equip college students for a lifetime of discipleship and Christ-centered evangelization.

For Luke, like most Duke students, imagining a post-Duke life as a missionary was not even on the table as he entered college.

"As a college student, I anticipated a career in neuroscience and medicine," said Luke. "I never thought I'd end up here. However, my heart quickly began to turn, and soften to the Father's promptings, once I began to enter into a deeper relationship with Christ and the Church through the vibrant campus ministry at Duke."

Luke participated in one of the DCC's first evangelization-centered small groups and quickly became a small group leader himself. As he continued to lead other students in weekly faith-sharing groups, Luke also began to help train new leaders himself and to mentor younger Duke Catholic students in their growing discipleship in Christ.

"Luke was instrumental in my faith formation," said Duke senior Elizabeth Bartusiak. "Throughout my freshman year, he walked with me in discipleship to challenge me to dive more into. He inspired me to fall more deeply in love with Jesus and to offer my whole heart to God. My spiritual life is richer from walking with Luke in discipleship."

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Luke and his four fellow UConn FOCUS missionaries.

“I am grateful to have met and learned from such a strong missionary disciple,” agreed Kyla Brezitski ’21. “Luke’s persistent friendship, incredible example of faith, and the convicting love he has for our Lord helped me to grow in my own relationship with Jesus. Luke inspired me to engage in more conversations with my peers about our faith journeys and to continue to develop a strong prayer life.”

As Luke’s relationship with Christ continued to grow, he felt himself longing to share that blessing with others. Shortly after graduating from Duke, after a year exploring religious life and serving as interim Peer Ministry Coordinator for the DCC, Luke

followed that yearning and applied to become a FOCUS missionary.

Now, in his second year as a missionary at UConn, Luke is living out the Great Commission and sharing the Gospel with college students in search of love, meaning, community, and purpose. Just as he did as a student at Duke, he now shares his own experience of finding new life in relationship with Jesus.

“I love the beginning of Pope Francis’ apostolic exhortation *Christus Vivit*: ‘Christ is alive and he wants you to be alive!’ I see my mission as simply an invitation to explore this truth, to get to know real, vibrant life in Christ. It’s been incredible to see God transform students’ lives right before my eyes; all through his grace. That’s definitely the most rewarding. And then some people won’t respond to my invitation at all, but I trust that God knows what he’s doing. And perhaps one day my simple outreach will play a part in someone’s eventual ‘yes’ to Christ.” 

BONUS: You can learn more about Luke and even directly support his mission here on his FOCUS page: <https://www.focus.org/missionaries/luke-duchemin>

“I met Luke the first semester of my freshman year, when he was a senior. We actually met on the very first day I ever spent at Duke. I had started to move into my room on East when my parents suggested we go to the welcome dinner at the DCC. Luke talked to me and my parents that night and I remember really feeling at home in the conversation.

That first semester, Luke and I were in the same small group for a few weeks and it was clear from the beginning that he had a special sort of relationship with Jesus and a special gift for articulating his thoughts on spirituality with the rest of the group. Over the course of that year, I became friends with Luke and with Seth McGann, another one of Luke’s friends. They became like my older brothers on campus. I would look forward to seeing Luke on Tuesday night dinner or at Mass on the weekends. Luke was always so welcoming—he, more than anyone else, made me feel at home in the Catholic center. I owe a lot of my past and current involvement in the DCC to my friendship with him.

Those first semesters of my Duke experience were good but tough, and I found myself struggling to understand my relationship with God, which didn’t really feel personal.

I wanted to improve it, but at the same time, I was worried about asking someone in authority about my situation. Luke became the obvious choice. He was so willing to talk to me about spirituality even when I was hesitant. We began meeting once a week to discuss spirituality and to pray together. I had never really done anything like it in my life, but these meetings really helped me begin to work through my thoughts on God and my Catholic faith. Luke helped me arrive at a place of comfort with my doubt. His energy and love of God were infectious. His kindness and openness with me were unwavering. I will always be grateful for having the chance to know Luke and learn about myself and God with him.

Even after he graduated, Luke and I kept in touch, and I was able to get lunch with him a year ago at the FOCUS SLS20 conference in Phoenix. Luke continues to communicate with me and my family, and I have enjoyed following him on his journey from Duke to his current work as a FOCUS missionary. I’m so thankful to Luke for welcoming me that first day, and for continuing to inspire me in my own journey of faith.

– Anthony Cardellini ’21

LETTER FROM FR. MIKE

“I pray before bed” and other lies I tell myself.

So many families do such a great job packing the toolkit that newly minted young adults will need as they head off to college. In that basket of skills are a mixture of information and practice, some of which has been slowly instilled over the years while others are shared in the final moments before leaving home. From knowing how to clean laundry to understanding the ramifications of sexual activity, good parents recognize the importance of sending daughters and sons off to college with all they will need to engage life without parental supervision. Appreciating that the cake is still being baked is no sign of negligence, but leaving out critical ingredients might be cause for some honest self-reflection.




Getting to know so many Duke students over the years has shown me how fantastic parenting (not perfect parenting) has been at the heart of the talents of so many of our students. That work, God’s grace, and the dedication of these young people never ceases to amaze. But what is likewise remarkable is the fact that the vast majority of them have little to no idea how to pray as Catholic adults.

Sent off to college with adult clothes, adult budgets, and adult responsibilities, most of our Catholic students arrive in Durham with underdeveloped prayer lives that are more fit for elementary school than the dorms of Duke. “I pray before I go to bed” is a euphemism for “I was taught as a child to say prayers in bed before Dad tucked me in and that doesn’t really cut it at 2am when I just stopped studying for an Organic Chemistry mid-term.” In actuality, it hasn’t been cutting it for most students for a number of years before Duke, thereby leaving a larger group of students without even the practice of telling God to watch

over them and the important people in their lives as they collapse from exhaustion into that unmade dorm bed.

This issue of our newsletter highlights some of the steps that the DCC is taking to equip our students with prayer lives that can meet the challenges of a 21st century Duke student, and more importantly, of a 21st century Catholic

adult. Like all of the other tools in their kit, this gift doesn’t have a fast track, but rather is as much about the process as the product. Spending time with Jesus in prayer often comes with the doubts that it even matters or anyone is even listening. That type of “failure” is hard for most Duke students (actually, most people) to justify spending the coin of the realm – time. But it is the prompting of the Holy Spirit who calls us all “to be with” our God more so than to immediately produce some hoped for result. Like working out, muscle develops over time.

The challenge of adult prayer is nothing new. The disciples, themselves adults, ask Jesus: “Lord, teach us how to pray. (Luke 11:1)” What our time calls for is the adults in the room to make prayer the priority that the other life skills are, or dare I say, the greatest life skill—the most eternal life skill. When we adults begin to explore the joys and struggles, the challenges and resources of a healthy adult prayer life, then and only then will we see Duke students who come with an adult realization of the responsibility, the challenge, and the blessing of prayer that, like all important things, is ill suited for the moments before bed. Should we all say a prayer before we go to bed? Absolutely! But if that is the definition of an adult prayer life then we are not only lying to each other, we are also lying to ourselves. 



Gene McDonald and his wife Barbara McDonald.

LEAVING BEHIND A LEGACY

The Duke Catholic Center is pleased to announce the largest single financial gift in the Center's history. The DCC has been honored by a bequest—a \$1M gift from the Eugene “Gene” McDonald (1932-2020) charitable remainder unitrust. The bequest will be placed in the Vetter endowment and which will grow the size of the Center's endowment to \$3.5M.

Gene held various positions at Duke for 20+ years of service from 1977 until 2000. He was the founding director of DUMAC, which manages Duke's endowment. In 2012, he established the charitable remainder unitrust, a type of planned gift, to benefit the Vetter Endowment to honor former DCC Director Fr. Joe Vetter. Besides making the planned gift, Gene was a loyal and generous leadership level annual fund donor to the DCC. He also joined the DCC on the

alumni and parent pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi in 2015. Gene was an accomplished fly fisherman, golfer and an oenophile. He loved learning, books, traveling, sports (especially Duke Basketball), fine cuisine and, above all, his family.

McDonald married his wife Barbara in 1958. He is survived by sons Michael (Wei), Mark (Mary), Matthew (Gigi) and Martin (Sara), daughters Zara and Molly, and five remarkable and loving grandchildren, Tucker (Gina), Tyler, Matthew, Morgan and Keera. DCC Director concelebrated Gene's funeral Mass that took place in September.

You can read more about Gene's life here:

<https://today.duke.edu/2020/09/duke-flags-low-red-eugene-mcdonald-founder-dumac-dies>





During the semester, the DCC often saw more than twenty student singers and musicians sharing their gifts at Sunday Mass!

Music Makes Liturgy



First-year Grace Vo is a regular violinist for DCC Masses.

The Music Ministry at the Duke Catholic Center has always been a constant. This has not changed during the pandemic. There have certainly been some much-needed pivots in much of the DCC programming lineup, but thankfully the music has never stopped playing.

Once the DCC decided to move its Sunday Mass in the Science Drive Parking Lot to comply with campus COVID regulations, it was clear that the Music Ministry would need to come up with new and creative ways to rehearse and sing for Mass. Since restrictions limited the number of people inside a building at one time, students met at the home of the Music Director, Andrew Witchger P'15, to rehearse outside, socially distanced on his front lawn. While there were acoustical challenges to rehearsing outside, it provided an

opportunity for students to continue to do what they love. It even created new opportunities for students who hadn't yet been singing or playing with the choir.

One particular student, junior Jonathan Perera, took this as an opportunity to get involved.

Jonathan sings in an acapella group on campus, at least he did until the pandemic hit. Unfortunately for Jonathan's acapella group, while they initially tried to rehearse via Zoom, they quickly realized that it was not going to work.

They had to put their acapella group on hold. In the meantime, Jonathan



Jonathan Perera '22 (left) and Arinze Okafor PhD cand. '26 (right) lift up their voices in praise during the prelude to Mass.

needed some kind of outlet to perform music, something to keep his mind off school. The answer was right in front of him.

"Andrew had been asking me for a long time to get involved and I told him I was always too busy with other commitments," said Jonathan. "This year, I decided to jump in. The acoustics in the garage are actually great and you really feel that elevation. Being a cantor feels like you are channeling the Holy Spirit."

Jonathan was not the only student that decided to try out the music ministry this year. About 10 different freshmen have stepped up and volunteered their time and singing talents to serve in the DCC choir. On campus, in person rehearsals take place in Goodson Chapel from 5-7:30pm on Wednesday nights. Since only a few students can be present at one time, there are 3-4 mini rehearsals with only 7-10 people at one time. For many students, this is the only real in-person experience they have on campus all week.

The result has been incredible. Since the DCC only has one Mass during the pandemic instead of the usual three, it has brought the entire music ministry to play together at once.

"Now instead of three choirs with maybe 7-10 students, there is one choir of 25 or more students," said Andrew. "The synergy that happens is remarkable."

While many parishes have had to stop their choirs because of the COVID-19 virus, the Duke Catholic Center sings on.

The choir has certainly been a staple at the DCC garage Mass. If you'd like to listen to the DCC choir, feel free to visit our YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL52646F21028DCECF>



(Left to right) DCC Choir members Nhat Duong PhD cand. '27, Elise Le Boulicaut PhD cand. '25, and Camila Rodriguez '24 warm up before Mass.



DCC WELCOMES

Sabina Marroquin




Sabina Marroquin, Director of Small Groups

When longtime Duke Catholic Center staffer Catherine Preston announced she would be leaving her post, the DCC knew it would be difficult to fill her shoes. That is why the DCC was so excited when it received an application from Sabina Marroquin. After a few interviews with Sabina, the DCC realized she would be the perfect person to take on the role of Director of Small Groups and lead one of the most important programs in our ministry.

Sabina is a graduate of Midwestern State University. She has extensive experience in her own campus ministry when she was an undergraduate student which inspired her to seek a vocation in ministry and pursue a year of service with the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. After the year of service is when she felt the pull to go back to school to pursue her graduate degree in Theology at the University of Dayton.

“Pursuing a career in ministry was less of a decision and more of a natural progression in my own faith life,” said Sabina. “In college, I began to take stock of how I was spending my free time, what I felt drawn to read when I wasn’t doing so for class, the people who brought out the best in me, and where in my life I felt the most true joy. Paying attention to those things made it clear to me that God and my Catholic faith were at the heart of who I wanted to be and how I wanted to exist in this world... My favorite aspect of ministry is journeying with people in the faith through times of consolation and desolation—I am in this for the long haul!”

Despite the pandemic, Sabina arrived to Durham in the Fall and hit the ground running as Director of Small Groups. She has assisted in launching completely virtual small groups and coaching small groups leaders during this difficult time. She’s also assisted in leading the virtual Duc-in-altum retreat over winter break.

“The primary focus of small groups is for students to grow closer to Christ through Scripture, but they also organically create a space for Christian community and meaningful relationships to form,” said Sabina. “So many people are craving community right now and our Small Group Leaders provide that every week without ever losing focus on Christ. I couldn’t have asked for a more dedicated group of student leaders to serve this semester, working with them has been the best thing about starting this job during a pandemic.” 

The Season of Giving



Duke Catholic Center students and staff dropping off Thanksgiving meal bags at the Durham Community Food Pantry.

Every year Duke students come together to lend a helping hand to those most in need in their Durham community. This year was no different. Thanks to the generosity of supporters, the DCC was able to raise over \$4,000 to purchase enough food to feed 200 families.

On a cool fall morning, 15 students and staff gathered in the Science Drive parking deck to stuff 200 bags full of food. Students were pleased to help give stuffing, mashed potatoes, yams, corn, green beans, and an assortment of other Thanksgiving themed food to families in need.


Once the bags were stuffed, it took 6 cars to load and drive all 200 bags to the Durham Food Pantry to be delivered to families. The staff at the food pantry were delighted and grateful for the students' help and generosity. Duke students were very humble and happy to help feed families in need. 🙏



DCC students shop for Thanksgiving food items and put together individualized Thanksgiving bags for Durham families.

WISH LIST

COVID-19 PARKING GARAGE MASS

Audio/Video IT Services (\$2,000 per month to hold mass in the garage and live stream through end of fall semester)	\$14,000
Van Rental  <i>Already donated</i> (\$750 per month for storage of Mass supplies in the parking garage through end of fall semester)	\$ 5,250
New Backdrop Banners for Lent and Easter Used behind the altar during Parking Garage Mass	\$ 800 <i>per banner</i>
Blankets for sitting at Parking Garage Mass for first year students	\$ 2,000
Duke Bus Mass Advertisement Sign printing	\$ 715
A month of bus advertisement space	\$ 100

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Keyboard	\$ 1,000
Violin	\$ 1,000

OTHER

First year and Grad welcome bags	\$ 3,000
DCC Campus Ministry Work Study Internships	\$ 6,000
Evangelical Catholic Helps train DCC staff and students in leading small groups, discipleship, and one-on-one spiritual direction	\$ 5,000

STAFF

FR. MICHAEL MARTIN, OFM CONV.

Director
fr.mike@duke.edu
(919) 684-1882

SR. MARCIA TERNES, FSE

Director of Faith Formation
sr.marcia@duke.edu
(203) 600-8934

SR. FRANCES ZAJAC, FSE

Director of Retreats and Pilgrimages
sr.frances@duke.edu
(203) 317-7788

ANDREW WITCHGER P'15

Director of Music
andrew.witchger@duke.edu
(919) 323-6902

EMMA MILLER '11

Director of Communication
emma.miller@duke.edu
(704) 267-3439

MYLAN METZGER

Peer Ministry Coordinator
mylan.metzger@duke.edu
(714) 813-2062

GEORGE BRUNNER

Assistant Director of Development
george.brunner@duke.edu
(919) 684-8959

MICHELLE SUTTON '12, CFRE

Director of Development
michelle.sutton@duke.edu
(919) 668-1472

RUTH ANNE KENNEDY

Business Manager
ruth.kennedy@duke.edu
(919) 684-3354

SABINA MARROQUIN

Director of Small Groups
sabina.marroquin@duke.edu
(940) 867-6352

