

## **Campus Ministry Work at All Saints Lutheran Church and Student Center**

God has sent thousands of college students to universities and colleges like Slippery Rock University, Grove City College, and Westminster College. Often American students as well as internationals are essentially unaware of the Gospel message, so the university scene is one of the most promising Gospel vineyards in America.

Almost all of the enormous number of international students who come to America speak English, so there is no need for us to learn a foreign language, obtain missionary training, and move to a foreign country in order to spread the Gospel. All we need to do is open our lives and our hearts and internationals quickly come to understand that we care about them.

Ever since All Saints Lutheran Church and Student Center was founded in 1977, the congregation has had the goal of reaching out to students. From the beginning we helped welcome college students to worship in a friendly, accepting and welcoming atmosphere. We have held social gatherings meant specifically for the student, we provide transportation to shops, doctors and bus stations, and we make the Campus Ministry Director available for talk 24-7.

Although many internationals are at our colleges, few get to meet real Americans even though they would like to. At one time it was much easier to reach students, especially internationals. Twenty to thirty years ago international students had a lot less money than they have now. In those days they really needed trips to Walmart or to the thrift stores in Butler and in Grove City to buy warm jackets and blankets. They really needed the snacks like Ramen noodles that we stocked in our church kitchen to supplement their food needs. They very much appreciated the photographs we took so they could send them home. Almost no one had his own camera in those days.

Today we have to work harder to connect with students. Fortunately, many still welcome friendship, rides to visit the Amish, invitations to our home for Thanksgiving dinner and Christmas dinner. Most of all they appreciate the chance to discuss their beliefs and they will listen to our testimony about faith in Jesus as our Savior. They have more money, but they still enjoy what All Saints calls friendship evangelism.

All Saints believes that responding to students, no matter where they are from, is a God-given opportunity to share the Gospel through friendship. If we don't tell, how will students know? Even American students need to be told because many don't know what Easter is about beyond Easter eggs and chocolate bunnies. We share with students by hosting a free homemade meal once a month during the school year. It has become known as the Korean meal because it is cooked by a Korean Christian friend in our town. The students love the time to eat a great meal and visit one another in a relaxed atmosphere. We used to show a movie with the meal, but now students prefer time to visit. It was suggested that we use these meals as times to preach, but we don't. Instead, we show what a Christian church is all about: God's

love. These meals give us the chance to invite students to come to worship and the Bible classes.

We openly say we are Christians and we'd love to share our faith. Some have come, talked, listened, studied, and become baptized Christians. This is our joy.

No one has to have a PhD to be a friend to students. We do need a desire to lovingly share our friendship and faith. Anyone and everyone can do that. The result is a deep sense of satisfaction, though students might not respond by becoming Christians. We have great joy because we believe God will touch the planted seeds of faith and bring faith in time.

Rev. Larry K. Loree, Campus Pastor

Mrs. Augusta R. Mennell, Campus Ministry Director