

A Pastor Matters

My own dear campus pastor made all the difference in my life at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Iowa City, Iowa, a campus ministry. I feel indebted to him. He really listened to me, and he gave me answers from the Bible.

It wasn't until this year's orientation meetings at Slippery Rock University that I was reminded of my college pastor. He is not the only pastor who is the reason that some college students are happy to come to a Lutheran campus ministry table at the orientations. They were not afraid to accept our invitations to sign-up for future student meals and activities, such as kayaking and going to the sportsman's range. A major reason for this student enthusiasm is that their pastors have been loving shepherds and it shows.

What happened is that students who came to orientation were attracted by two things: Leif's funny question and by the influence of their pastors back home. You might laugh to hear this, but the question All Saints Fellowship's president, Leif Lotvedt, asked the students made them laugh! He asked, "Do you like free food?" They retorted, "Of course!" Then they gave Leif their names and phone numbers so campus ministry could call them to invite them to all the events at the Lutheran center, including our monthly free meals. It was Leif's humorous question, but it was also their relationship with their pastors that gave them the willingness to let us invite them to participate in our organized activities in the fall.

All Saints got to hear from students about two Lutheran pastors who made a significant difference. The first pastor is not from the Slippery Rock area. When this student told us the name of her church, we already knew all about him. We knew him because he helped a dear lady who lived in an area nursing home. She was lonely and desperately wanting to live near her son. After many months she was allowed to move closer to her son. Sadly, he was not interested in seeing her.

We called the Lutheran Church near her to see if he could help. That pastor was an angel. He visited her regularly, instructed her in the Lutheran faith, arranged rides for her to his church where the congregation became her family. And he included her in his calls, taking her his own homemade ice cream. Most of all, he went often to see her as she grew near to death. We know of his care for this lady. It is no wonder the student who was part of his congregation wanted to continue growing in faith. We are so thankful for this pastor's influence.

The second pastor who is an inspiration to his student was once a vicar at All Saints. The student and his parents stopped at the table which displayed photos and also books to give away. They looked at the photo of the church building and said, "our pastor helped to build your church!". I was stunned. How could that be? And then I did remember. He was the vicar at All Saints when my husband and I first visited All Saints. He was an excellent preacher who was loved by the students and the congregation. Everyone hoped he could stay, but he got a call. In fact, he is at that very church today. During his time as vicar he influenced everyone including

students because he really wanted everyone to know God's Word. He is one reason his student is ready to grow spiritually.

These two pastors are not unusual. They did what pastors do. They were shepherds who help their students. Now campus ministry gets to meet those students and welcome them to our church and campus ministry. What a blessing!



All Saints Fellowship President, Leif Lotvedt welcomes Slippery Rock University students to All Saints at campus Orientation event.