

Advice From a Senior

Luke Pugliese is such an easy student to talk with. He is always smiling and enjoying his peers from Slippery Rock University and Grove City College. He is very comfortable with the college students who sit shoulder to shoulder in the church pews.

He is in church regularly. He helps Rev. Jacob Deal, pastor at All Saints Lutheran Church and Student Center, with encouraging students to attend the Bible studies and chat times that Rev. Deal leads on the campuses of SRU and Grove City College. In the time he has been here at All Saints he has become the president of the student fellowship and plays on SRU's football team.



Luke is such a natural at helping at All Saints that I decided to ask him what his advice would be for students coming to college for the first time. His answer really surprised me. It gave me a peek into the real challenges facing students.

Without hesitation this seemingly fearless student said that he would advise students “not to be afraid of going to church when they arrive on campus.” I was really amazed. Why would a student who was so outgoing be telling others not to be afraid?

Luke helped by explaining that he had grown up in one church, Redeemer Lutheran Church in Oakmont, PA, during his whole life. This was the church in Pittsburgh that he attended with his family. This church was his family! He loves the people, the pastor, and being with members who had become his church family. So, instead of feeling great about coming to a strange church in Slippery Rock, he preferred to go home on the weekends and attend the service at Redeemer.

Luke's family and friends encouraged him to try attending All Saints. He looked at All Saints' webpage, but that did not convince him to come in for worship. What did get him to come was a buddy who was not even a Lutheran. His friend offered to go with Luke to All Saints the next Sunday.

They came together to All Saints and that is all it took. Luke describes everyone as being very welcoming and friendly. He said that Rev. Deal's sermon was just right for him and so was Pastor Deal's invitation to get together so that they could talk.

The fear was gone. Luke felt at home. In fact, his goal is to bring at least ten more students to All Saints before he graduates this December.

Members of All Saints can't keep the smiles from their faces as they see the students fill the pews. Members are just so glad that students feel that All Saints is their church away from home. Members are happy to welcome students, especially those who may worry about coming to a “strange” church!

Blessings to students. Thanks for the advice, Luke!

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