

Campus Ministry's Precious Task

Even though Christian parents do all they can to instill faith in their children, it is still a huge challenge for their college-bound children to remain Christian when they attend college. This is where campus ministry comes into the picture.

Campus ministry at All Saints Lutheran Church and Student Center is well aware of the challenges facing students when they come to Slippery Rock University, Grove City College, and Westminster College. One of the first things campus ministry does is to connect with them as soon as possible so they will know that we are eager to be part of their lives.

I called students inviting them to join us for a Saturday kayaking outing this month which is just after classes resume. The nineteen slots available for places in the kayaks filled quickly. The opportunity to talk to the students was a blessing for us. They appreciated our willingness to help make their first weeks on campus more fun and less stressful. They were glad to be assured when we said they didn't have to worry if they had never been kayaking before.

Calling them about kayaking gave us the opportunity to invite them to come to All Saints for any help they need in their personal lives. One young lady we called stammered when she, on her own, said she knew she "should" come in for confession, but went on to say she really didn't understand it. Calling the students about kayaking, therefore, was a good way to help them understand that we can help them even with their very personal questions!

All Saints campus ministry is committed to showing that we are all about the Gospel. As soon as a student steps into our sanctuary, the striking crucifix above the altar rivets their attention. The crucifix leaves no doubt that this ministry is all about the Gospel.

You might say, "Well, of course! What else could campus churches proclaim?" Thankfully, the college students who come in through our doors will hear what the Bible says about everything: marriage, who God is, piety as opposed to pietism; God's gift of life to babies. All Saints campus ministry pastor Rev. Jacob Deal is not only at ease with students, he is intent on being available to give them God's Word to answer their questions: how Lutherans differ from Presbyterians; and what a Christian should feel about any of the current issues. Pastor Deal encourages students to come in to share their questions. He knows life is stressful and confusing for students. He is always available for questions like: "Isn't God unfair by demanding that we either believe in Jesus or face eternal damnation? Or, "Is Christianity only for getting ready to die? Or is it also for our every day living?"

Campus ministry will do everything possible to help students remain strong in their faith, but campus ministry would really appreciate your help. Would you please pray for our college students? You can also give the name of your college students to members of your church so that they can send them cards and cookies. Another way to help with students is to have activities like sewing classes which include students like Mrs. Rigney's class at All Saints does. Remember

that students, especially internationals and out of state students, would enjoy being invited to your home. Could you be a friendship family to a student?

Let the students know their pastor would be glad to connect them with the Lutheran Church on their campus. And never give up on praying for students, even students who are growing in their faith need prayer, as do students who are struggling to let God hold onto them. Especially point them to hearing God's Word in church and in daily devotions. God hears your prayers for students. Campus ministry appreciates all of your loving help for our treasures: our students.

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Rev. Jacob Deal answers questions about the Book of Concord.