

A Thankful Campus Ministry

Imagine a group of college students peacefully kayaking along a backwoods creek when all of a sudden a water fight breaks out. That is just what happened this last August when All Saints campus ministry sponsored a kayaking event on French Creek for Slippery Rock University and Grove City College students, just after they returned to campus.

There they were, enjoying the French Creek scenery when all of a sudden they were deluged by Rev. Jacob Deal. He had brought his children's fully loaded water pistols with him on the kayaking trip. Everyone, including Rev. Deal, enjoyed not only the water battle, but also the lunch and getting to know each other.

I'm thankful for this fun event for the students, which was organized by All Saints' president Peter Rigney and by All Saints Fellowship's student president, Leif Lodtvet. It was so much fun that it was described as "Fantastic," and "The most fun ever," and "When can we do it again?"

Thankful is how campus ministry feels about the kayaking. It gave an open door to drawing students to All Saints where they can have not only fun, but a great opportunity to mingle with other Christians and to learn more about the Christian faith through Campus Pastor Deal, who will hold Bible studies for them. He welcomes students to ask serious questions.

All Saints campus ministry is also very thankful to have been invited to attend Slippery Rock University Events Day, and, for the first time, we are now also attending Grove City College's annual Ministry Fair. Rev. Deal and I stood by our orientation table in the hot sun in SRU's quad. We talked to students. We invited them to our Labor Day meal. A most exciting result was meeting an LCMS student named Matt, who accepted our invitation to the Labor Day meal. Another blessing was hearing how the chalked sidewalk message by Amy, who attends All Saints, was seen and which drew attention to the Labor Day meal. Rev. Deal already has plans to make our presence at next year's SRU Events Day even more attractive.

Being at Grove City College's annual Ministry Fair was a blessing, too. All Saints attracted many LCMS Grove City College students. Consequently, it was just wonderful to have their students come to our table at their Ministry Fair, where they asked if we were LCMS. They were openly delighted to find we are. They were so glad to tell Rev. Deal who their home pastor was, the name of their church, and to be assured, as church member Mrs. Rosemary Rigney had suggested, that we tell the students we have members who will provide transportation to church from the Grove City College campus. It was wonderful that seven old and new GCC students did come to worship with us the following Sunday.

The Labor Day student meal was another big reason for giving thanks to God. Campus ministry got to see how God really used even a smaller group for large results. Each student who came to have a delicious meal also got to talk about their faith and personal struggles.

That is because campus pastor Rev. Deal made it a point to sit and talk with every student.

An international student from Pakistan talked about her faith with Rev. Deal. He listened. He invited her to learn about Christianity. He invited her to a student Bible class he will hold. She felt comfortable with the conversation with Pastor Deal, as well as with talking with church members Jill, Billie, and Joanne. She took a photograph of them to send to her mother in Turkey.

Two nondenominational students came to the meal. They, too, were greeted by Pastor. They are incredibly glad they had the chance to ask him questions. They wanted to know what our Lutheran Church believes about Communion and gender. He patiently answered them. In addition to questions, they wanted to share some of what their lives had been. This was such a great opportunity. They will come again.

Although it was quite late, Rev. Deal drove them back to their dorms so he could take their friends food we had leftover. He felt compassion for the students who would really appreciate the delicious foods. From this smaller group came a great opportunity to share faith at a deeper level. We are thankful for every opportunity to share faith and friendship with college students.

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