

HELP WRITE THE NEXT CHAPTER OF ISM INC.

Ken Bickel

ISM Inc. Board Member

In 2021, ISM launched a new era when Sue Hasselbring was hired as the first ever Ministry Catalyst. COVID-19 had taken a toll on many ISM sites around the country, as international student enrollments declined and those remaining avoided social contact. Ministry sites around the country were struggling to connect with international students and recruit volunteers.

Now record numbers of international students are arriving on campuses. Since Sue joined ISM, programs like In-Depth and the Equipping Conference have restarted to minister to these students, some ministry sites have been revitalized and new ministries are starting.

Hiring a professional Ministry Catalyst means our ISM budget has doubled. We praise God that ISM's supporters have increased giving, but a significant gap between budget and

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GOD WORKS THROUGH PLANTED SEEDS

Liz Beikmann,

Coordinator, ISM St. Luke's, Manhattan, KS

Through seeds planted by a friendship family, God worked faith in the life of Martin, a former atheist from the Czech Republic. Martin studied for one semester at Kansas State University. Sandi and Vince — members of St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Manhattan, Kansas, who have been a friendship family to many students over the past decade — met him at the airport when he arrived and welcomed him for a visit on their ranch.

Like Sandi and Vince, about ten families at St. Luke's are assigned students



Martin at the Ranch

from the Czech Republic this semester. They pick them up from the airport, host them in their homes for a couple nights, help them move into university housing and stay in touch with them throughout the semester. They also pray for the student assigned to them and look for opportunities to share Christ's love.

St. Luke's partners with Helping International Students (HIS), a local Christian organization, in hosting these students. Most of the students profess to be atheist. Below is Sandi's story of how God

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CAN I BE BAPTIZED?

Augusta R. Mennell

Campus Ministry Director

All Saints Lutheran Church and Student Center, Slippery Rock, PA

God continues to give faith even in the most unexpected ways, even as he did during Jesus' life and in the book of Acts.

Mohammad's parents came to the U.S. from a Muslim country in the Middle East. Mohammad was born in the U.S. and raised in a loving Muslim family. He says he was always aware of God but didn't know Him. He attended a Christian preschool in New York City where he learned Christian children's songs such as "Jesus Loves Me." He enjoyed the Bible stories, songs, and fellowship but did not yet understand that Jesus was his Savior.

After attending a public grade school, his family enrolled him in a

(Continued - See "Baptized" p. 2)

BE A FRIEND FIRST

Sue Hasselbring

ISM Inc. Ministry Catalyst

During his first week on campus at Purdue, Janis bowed his head to pray in the dorm cafeteria. As he started to eat his meal, Bo, a student from Asia, approached him. "Are you a Christian? May I ask you some questions?" Thus began a friendship that Janis believes helped him more than it helped Bo. The questions Bo asked prompted Janis to think in new ways about God and his work. Janis, like many university students, developed many new friendships his first year. Early on, Janis spent quite a bit of time with Bo, answering his questions. When Janis learned that Bo was attending church with two other Christians, and as Janis got involved in other activities, his contact with Bo decreased. Just recently, he saw that

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("Friend" contined from p. 1)

Bo changed his status on social media to "Child of God." Janis asked Bo about that. "I am a Christian now!" Bo shared.

Throughout his first year on campus, Janis learned a lot about hospitality and the power of truly caring for others. At one Christian event he attended, six different people came up to him, introduced themselves and had a conversation with him in which he could tell that they really cared about him (and about others visiting for the first time). That was different to other congregations he attended where a couple people were friendly but did not seem to truly care.

Over the past year, Janis has learned to be more hospitable himself. He says that it starts with the simplicity of introducing yourself, but then moves to asking questions that show that you care: How is it going? How is college? What are you worried about? And then listening well. He finds that those from overseas are far more willing to talk than Americans. He has started to invite other students to come to his apartment for a meal. "The first time was a bit awkward, but it is not that difficult. It allows you a safer place to have a conversation."

He has also learned to think differently about sharing the gospel. Previously, if he learned someone was not a Christian, then sharing the gospel was a task he felt he was supposed to do. Once he had done so, he was done. He now realizes that being a friend first is important. Sharing the gospel is a process that includes sharing God's love with them and inviting them to learn about God.

No, Janis is not some super Christian. He has lots of questions himself. He struggles with priorities. He is thankful for God's work in his life and seeks his guidance in his relationships. †

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donations remains.

Will you join in supporting ISM's next chapter to reach "the nations who have come to us"? You can contribute online at www.isminc.org; by check to ISM Inc, by using the enclosed envelope; or through donations from a Donor Advised Fund. While we especially need donations to our general fund at this time, any contributions made to our Endowment Funds will receive a 20 percent match from the Clara and Spencer Werner Foundation. †

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worked in Martin's life.

"Our student, Martin, was recently baptized. What a powerful experience to see how God worked through all of us to turn this self-proclaimed atheist into a Christian. We had no idea what to expect when he told us he would be baptized at a local lake by the pastor of another church where he had attended a Bible Study. I expected a handful of people and prayed that there would at least be a prayer. It was so much more. At first a few people came, but they kept coming with a total of around 70.

The leader of that church led the service. He started with a prayer and then Martin and a friend sang a couple of songs. More songs followed and everyone sang "Amazing Grace" and "How Great Is Our God." The leader presented the gospel and talked about how our actions have consequences. Most of the Czech exchange students currently attending Kansas State attended.

Martin spoke about his journey to Christ. He had regularly come to church with us, his friendship family, mainly because we always took him out for lunch.



Vince and Sandi

("Baptized" contined from p. 1)

Catholic high school with high academic standards. The theology teacher there was an LCMS member. When he learned of Mohammad's deep interest in the Christian faith, he gave him books and taught him about God's word. Mohammad read Luther's Small Catechism and Daniel Preus's "Why I Am a Lutheran: Jesus at the Center." He watched a number of pastors online and was convinced that he was now a Christian. And yet, he felt something was missing. He especially doubted the online preachers' teaching on baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Mohammad's teacher arranged for him to have breakfast with his LCMS pastor so they could discuss his theological questions. Mohammad had more questions than could be discussed over breakfast. When they met at the church, Mohammad saw the baptismal font in the sanctuary

Martin loves music and became involved in several choirs. The more he attended church, the more interested he became, so he started attending Bible studies. I think he enjoyed the new friends, and the Bible

study was just part of having time with friends. He became friends with the man who baptized him and asked him many questions. He learned what it means to be a Christian and realized that Jesus was now part of his life. He said, 'I guess I came for the food and stayed for Jesus.' He was baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We are very proud of Martin. As he left for home, he was aware that he may face challenges at home. His family, all atheists, will not be very happy with his decision. But we have learned that God can work through anyone under any circumstance and the seed has been planted."

Before returning home, Martin said he wanted to find a small group Bible study back home. As Coordinator of ISM for St. Luke's, and having worked with the exchange students from Prague for a number of years, I put him in touch with someone in Prague who is a Christian and will hopefully help him find a small group. †

and asked the pastor "Can I be baptized?" The pastor realized that Mohammad was a believer, and the following Sunday he was baptized.

After further instruction and confirmation, he was full of joy at being able to partake of Communion. However, he was afraid to tell his family. When he did tell them, they said that what faith was doing to their son was better than no faith at all. Because Mohammad's aunts and uncles might not respond as favorably, his extended family does not yet know.

Mohammad is a transformed person. His greatest joy is inviting other students to his church and studying God's Word in the Sunday Adult Bible Class. He also attends a Sunday night Bible study at his college where he is learning about the Augsburg Confession. His faith, like the faith of each believer, is a gift from God. †

SHARE CHRIST BY SHARING HOLIDAY TRADITIONS!

Vickie Loemker

Coordinator, ESL Conversation Group,
Trinity Lutheran, Norman, OK

I am looking at my fall schedule, and I can't believe that I am thinking about Thanksgiving and Advent and Christmas, but I need to plan ahead for the group! We have several special events coming up in November and December to celebrate the fast approaching holidays and holy days! We enjoy the opportunities the holidays present to share time and meaningful conversations with our students. Here are some things we have tried:

First of all, we have tried several ways to share Thanksgiving with them. The simplest is to have a presentation about the history of Thanksgiving and its current celebration customs. Our volunteers bring samples of various Thanksgiving foods and share small amounts – just to taste. This worked well and didn't involve a lot of planning or a special venue like a meal

would. Last year we had a number of church members prepare various parts of a Thanksgiving dinner and we all (volunteers and students) shared a meal together at the church on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. We preceded it with a short presentation about Thanksgiving history and customs, and shared food and conversation around the tables. Everyone really enjoyed that, and we are planning to do it again this year.

About a week later is the traditional decorating of the church on the Friday before the first Sunday of Advent. We always invite the students to join us for this, and in the past two years two or three have come! Last year one asked if he could bring a friend, and we were delighted that he did. For all of the students, this is the only time that they have ever decorated a Christmas tree, and since our church tree is decorated with Chrismons, it offers an opportunity to share the meaning of the season through the decorations. After we decorate the church, we all share a

soup and dessert potluck meal.

On the second or third Saturday of December we have a special Christmas activity with the students. We have made Christmas decorations, baked and decorated cookies, or (a

favorite) built "gingerbread" houses using graham crackers and all sorts of candies and frostings. We sometimes begin with a presentation about Christmas, and often our Pastor attends and gives a tour of the decorated sanctuary with an explanation of some of the decorations and the nativity.

Christmas Eve is a special service that we always invite students to attend, and many do. We provide rides to those



Graham Cracker House Masterpiece



International Students Help Decorate the Sanctuary

who need transportation, and volunteers sit with the group to help them navigate the service. One long-term student from Taiwan, who has become a Christian while here, tells us that the Christmas Eve service "is Christmas to me." We always have students thank us for sharing this with them.

Your situation will be different, but your students are undoubtedly curious about all the various and often conflicting messages of the holiday season. Maybe you can invite them to some of your special events. You are likely to have more interest than you expected. †



Building Gingerbread Houses with Graham Crackers

PRINTABLE RESOURCE: THE MEANING OF COMMON CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

Follow the link below to view, download or print a one-page sheet explaining in plain English the meaning behind common Christmas decorations:

<https://tinyurl.com/DecorationMeaning>

UPDATE FROM THE FRIENDSHIP HOUSE

Dan Winter
Friendship House
East Lansing, MI

We've had a full slate of activities this summer and early fall as we seek to connect with and minister to international students and scholars.

During this summer, in brief, we took a trip to the Henry Ford Museum, gave our students the chance to experience the "lake life" of a Michigander, enjoyed a garden party at a teacher's home (thank you, Mary Lou), and went picking berries several times.

Though the university welcomes graduate students, visiting scholars, and post-doc candidates year-round, the fall tends to be our busiest time: we welcomed over 100 individuals for our fall semester. In the past week alone, we received five new community members.

Our sewing class returned this fall. We have plans for trips to pick apples, attend an MSU ice hockey game (complete with a pregame tailgate party), visit Frankenmuth (a very Lutheran experience), as well as a party to decorate the house and another to celebrate the meaning of Christmas around the tree!

I give thanks each day for all of the support our churches and volunteers provide and for the enormous love the international community returns to us. What a blessing it is to be in international ministry! †



Group Photo from Mary Lou's Garden Visit



Group Photo from Cottage Visit



Fall 2023 Sewing Class

JOIN US FOR EQUIPPING CALLS IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER!

ISM Equipping Calls in November and December will build skills in planning and designing lessons and events. The methods are helpful as we minister among international students, scholars and their families, but they are also helpful more broadly in our churches and families. The same session will be offered three times in November and three times in December. Each call lasts 90 minutes. Links to the call will be shared with those who sign up at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/ISMequip>.

Designing Learning Experiences to Meet Needs and Bring Change

- November 13 8am Pacific, 9am Mountain, 10am Central, 11am Eastern
- November 13 5pm Pacific, 6pm Mountain, 7pm Central and 8pm Eastern
- November 14 noon Pacific, 1pm Mountain, 2pm Central, 3pm Eastern

Learning Tasks that Help Learners Apply and Take Action

- December 11 8am Pacific, 9am Mountain, 10am Central, 11am Eastern
- December 11 5pm Pacific, 6pm Mountain, 7pm Central and 8pm Eastern
- December 12 noon Pacific, 1pm Mountain, 2pm Central, 3pm Eastern



Prayers for Peace

- May God grant peace and comfort to all of the international students from Israel, Palestine, Iran and other countries involved in current hostilities.
- May God give grace to his people to listen with compassion to the pain, fear, grief, anger and other emotions expressed by students about all that is happening.
- May God bring this conflict and all conflicts to an end, restoring peace and safety.

*International Student Ministry,
Pittsburgh, PA
Rev Eric Andrae*

- Thanksgiving for a new volunteer ESL teacher, John Austin. He is a recent graduate of Marquette who moved to Pittsburgh to work as a software engineer. He is now considering attending seminary.
- Pray for Joe (China), Niihau and Miaymi (Japan) (not their real names), who are studying the Bible with us and considering baptism.

*ISM Austin, TX
University Lutheran Church
Marcia Mittwede*

- Thank the Lord for continued good contact with new students - both internationals and Americans.
- For new internationals who are attending classes. That all of us who facilitate groups would be the fragrance of Jesus to them: B (S. Korea); M (Brazil); T, A (Japan), J (China), H, N (Iran)
- For continued growth in relationship to Jesus: D, A, J, J, M, (S. Korea)
- Thank the Lord that Richard and I are making progress in hiring someone to repair our hail-damaged house. Thank the Lord that we have been able to replace our two cars totaled by the hail.

Thanksgiving Dinners

- Praise God for each ISM Site which is preparing to host a Thanksgiving dinner and for each volunteer who is providing food, rides, or will engage in conversation during the dinner.
- May God be at work during these dinners to deepen relationships and form new relationships between participants.
- May God guide those who will share, sing, play or pray during these dinners so that their words communicate clearly, and that the generosity and love of Christ is understood.
- May each international student, scholar and their family members who attend know that Christians really care about them, and may they feel free to ask questions or share thoughts that they have.

Advent and Christmas Events

- May God guide all ISM sites and congregations in preparing for and welcoming students to Advent and Christmas activities.
- May volunteers identify ways to welcome international students and scholars they know into personal, family, or church events.
- May each international student, scholar and family member have the opportunity to learn more about the depth of God's love that caused him to send his Son to take on flesh and dwell among us.

Hospitality and Friendship

- May God help all his people to grow in true care for those who do not yet know him.

- May we take time to build deeper relationships, open our homes to visitors, listen to them well and share Christ's grace and truth.
- Praise God for the many questions that international students and scholars have about faith and life. May God help us to listen well and respond as he desires to each question.

*Beautiful Feet Missions Conference
Nov 9-11 Seward, Nebraska*

- May God help the Concordia students from across the U.S. as they gather in Seward for this three-day conference to learn more about how he is preparing them to minister among those from other cultures.
- Guidance for Sue Hasselbring and Mark Meyer (Lincoln, NE) in preparing and sharing a breakout session about being an intentional international friend.
- May God bless the interactions that Sue and Mark have with students at the ISM Inc. display, sharing resources and encouraging them.

ISM Grants and Finances

- Pray for the Texas, Michigan and Missouri District LWML grant committees as they review the ISM Inc. grant requests for 2024-2026. May God grant them wisdom as they decide whether the grants can be moved onto the ballot for their District.
- May God guide his people in filling the gap between current giving and expenses.
- May God continue to grant wisdom to the ISM Inc. Board in continuing to manage our finances well. †

SUBMIT YOUR ISM-RELATED PRAYERS

You are always welcome to submit prayers via email to: prayer@isminc.org. We encourage you to use the Prayer Request Form you can find at:

<https://tinyurl.com/ismincprayer>

Why not bookmark the form and send off a prayer request whenever the Spirit moves you?



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*Doorstep***News**

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DOORSTEP CHANGE FOR 2024

The Doorstep News will come out in February, May, August and November of 2024. Emailed prayer updates will continue to come out every two to four weeks between issues of the Doorstep. Email Prayer@isminc.org to request to be added to the emailed prayer updates.

Open this issue to learn about a student named Mohammed who asked, "Can I be baptized?"


What a joyful question!


AND READ ABOUT


- Help write the next chapter of ISM Inc.
- God works through planted seeds
- Share Christ by Sharing Holiday Traditions
- Be a friend first
- Join us for Equipping Calls in November and December
- And more...



A baptismal font similar to the one Mohammed saw that the day he asked to be baptized.

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