

INVITE YOUR INTERNATIONAL FRIEND TO IN-DEPTH!



Do you remember a Christian retreat or gathering that changed your walk with Jesus? In-Depth Bible Seminar has been life changing for many international students and scholars. This year's In-Depth, May 14-20, provides international students and scholars as well as their families an opportunity to spend a week studying the book of John in-depth as well as learning what God's Word reveals about our three-in-one God, his commands, baptism, salvation and the church. If you know an international student or scholar who is a believer or active seeker and has been studying God's Word one-on-one or in a group for about 6 months by May, start talking to them about this opportunity.

A brochure to share with students and registration materials are available through www.isminc.org/conferences. †

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REPORT – ISM GRANTS ARE MAKING A BIG IMPACT

During 2022, ISM Inc. has shared \$4,850 in Christ-Centered Resources and Events Grants with ISM sites across the US. Reports are coming in about how the grant resources have been used and the impact they had.

Pittsburgh ISM, First Trinity Church Pastor Eric Andrae

Some 55 people from our parish and various missions (including campus ministry, deaf mission, blind center, Holy Cross, flute academy, and homeless ministry) enjoyed our annual catered Thanksgiving feast, held before students went on break. For many of the internationals it was their first time participating in this American

holiday tradition. We shared not only the American roots of the holiday, but also why and to Whom we give thanks. Non-Christian international students and their families were intentionally seated at tables with our Christians students and parishioners, to provide opportunities for forming lasting friendships in our Lord, while demonstrating Christian hospitality.

One ESL student from Japan emailed: "Thank you for inviting us to your wonderful party today. We had a good time for our first thanksgiving meal. I always appreciate it." Another student from Japan texted: "Hi Pastor Andrae! Thanks for having us today."

(Continued on page 4 — see "Report")

ONLINE RELATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING WITH PASTOR MATT KOENIG



Pastor Matt Koenig of Prince of Peace, Palatine, IL will help us think through how to move from Connecting, to Caring, into Community, and then into a relationship with Christ. This is how Jesus welcomed people into God's Kingdom, starting by connecting with them where they are. This 90 minute zoom training is for all who are friends of

(Continued on page 3 — see "Koenig")

CONNECTING LIKE JESUS

Sue Hasselbring
Ministry Catalyst,
ISM Inc.



Close your eyes,
Can you see
Jesus connecting?

...With John the Baptist, assuring him that this is how it must be, I am to be baptized by you,

...With the deaf man, taking him aside to heal him privately,

...With blind Bartimaeus asking what he wanted,

(Continued on page 2 — see "Jesus")

CHRISTIAN CONNECTION CAN BE MORE CROCKPOT THAN MICROWAVE

Mimi (not her real name) believes in and trusts Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of her sins and the salvation of her soul. But it wasn't always that way.

Once upon a time, a young lady named Mimi came to the U.S. as an international student from Vietnam. She was invited to a dinner with some Christians and other international students. At that dinner, Mimi talked about an outing she was organizing with some friends to go to the Moon Cake Festival. The Christian friends asked to tag along and Mimi said, "Sure!"

A short while later, another friend was looking for volunteers to watch children while mothers attended a "Women of Dignity" conference at a local church. Mimi said she'd love to help. She loves children and she was also impressed by the social programs



of the church.

More time passed and one of Mimi's new Christian friends asked if she would like to read the Bible with her. They started meeting every week to read a chapter of the Bible. They talked about what it meant and how it might apply to their lives.

A little more time passed. The Christian friend got ahold of a bi-lingual English/Vietnamese tract explaining the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a straightforward way. Having received the love of her Christian friends and done some study of the scriptures, Mimi received the news of the Gospel with great joy.

It started with love and connection. In the long run, it led to Jesus. †

(Thank you to Doorstep readers Eugene and Sylvia Hemmann for sharing the newsletter upon which this article is based.)

("Jesus" — Continued from page 1)

...With the woman at the well, asking her to help him, and then revealing that he had living water for her,

...Even with Pilate, the women along the road, and the thief on the cross, Jesus connected.

He showed them how much he valued them by giving his full attention, listening to them, and speaking words they needed to hear — words that pointed them toward God and the truth, but words that also connected to their current situation. Peter, Phillip and Paul all followed Jesus' example by connecting. They connected with some who were similar to them and others who were very different.



Recently, some of us thought of an international student we know. We thought about their current ups and downs, their situation. And then we thought about what Jesus would want them to know. Here are some things that were mentioned:

- How deeply he loves them.
- That he cares about their daily life.
- I know you, I know your name.
- You cannot "make it" on your own.
- That they can relax, they don't need to always try to score with God.

Perhaps you can imagine one of these phrases connecting well with students you know. Now, can you think of Bible verses or stories from the Bible that go along with these? Yes! So many. Some may say these are not the most important truths. But Jesus connected with the magi as a King, with John the Baptist as the Lamb of God, with the disciples as a Rabbi, he was only known as the crucified one later. We can also connect with people where they are, trusting we will continue to reveal more as time goes on. May we reveal during this Epiphany season the aspects of Jesus' life that connect most with students' and scholars' current joys and sorrows. And may God grant us the patience to continue to listen to them, value them and give them our attention. †

MEET OUR NEW ISM BOARD MEMBER: PASTOR BILL JENSEN

Pastor Bill was called by the Central Illinois District to be the campus pastor at Wittenberg Lutheran Chapel in Normal, Illinois. While there he has had a multifaceted ministry, serving the students, faculty, and staff at Illinois State University, Illinois Wesleyan University, Heartland Community College, and other commuter students from colleges in surrounding counties.



He has played and coached football at several levels. And he recently joined the Danish Brotherhood of America (pending a pronunciation test!).

Pastor Bill lives in Normal Illinois with his wife, Cindy. He has three children and five grandchildren, who all call him, "Pappy." †

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How to designate your donation to ISM:

- online at Thrivent.com/thriventchoice or
- call 800-847-4836 and when prompted, say "Thrivent Choice."

The deadline is March 31, 2023

2022 FRIENDSHIP HOUSE CONNECTIONS

Dan Winter

Executive Director - Friendship House MSU

The Friendship House has wonderful volunteers and financial supporters who follow the Holy Scripture's admonition to love our neighbors as ourselves. They have made possible all of the following:

- The baptism of an international student;
- Registering over 90 people for the fall semester, with new students arriving weekly;
- Having as many as 15 people physically in class here at the house (while an equal number joined via Zoom video conferencing);
- Having Zoom students join us from Iran, China, Denmark, Turkey, South Korea, and other countries around the world;
- Having frequent conversation partner meetings in the house, around town, or virtually across many time zones;
- The donation of countless bicycles to international students;
- The return of field trips to places like Frankenmuth, Greenfield Village, and a local apple orchard;
- And restarting the Friday meal gatherings of international students.

We look forward in 2023 to moving into our fourth decade of positively impacting the lives of countless internationals in the name of Jesus. †



Open House



Friday meal gathering



Pastor Dean's prayer before kicking off the Greenfield Village trip



Apple orchard field trip

(“Koenig” — Continued from page 1)

internationals as well as for ISM volunteers and staff. We will offer this discussion at three times:

- Thursday, January 19, 2023, 2pm Central
- Thursday, January 19, 2023, 8pm Central
- Monday, January 23, 2023, 10am Central



Please register through this form so we can send you a reminder email for the correct session: <https://tinyurl.com/3v5sk25f>

You can download a PDF of this invitation to print or share with volunteers at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/5babbp7n> †

RECONNECTING AFTER 20 YEARS!

Wayne Weiss

ISM Board, Madison, WI

The longer I'm associated with international ministry, the more miracles come my way.

As I was addressing Christmas cards to some of our ISM donors last Friday, a name caught my attention. It was for Tulip Yu of California. Years ago, my wife and I knew a Tulip when we first started volunteering at the International Friendship Center in Madison. Tulip was her chosen American name. She was our first real international friend. She and her husband moved to California in 2006. Could this be the same Tulip? How many people pick that name? Fortunately, there was a phone number. I called and left a voicemail identifying myself as being with ISM and thanking her for her donation. I also asked if she had ever gone to the IFC in Madison. Within 30 seconds I had a call back! YES, it was the same Tulip! My wife and I spoke with her for 15 minutes, of which she was crying with joy the whole time. We were also fighting tears of joy. What a terrific blessing to be able to reconnect. We are setting a time for a much longer conversation in the near future.

Two years before leaving Madison, Tulip had a baby daughter. She is now 18 and graduating from high school this spring. Tulip mentioned how her daughter often asks about the town where she was born and says she would like to visit it. Tulip says that they are discussing a possible visit to Madison after graduation.

I asked her how she is still connected to ISM. While she was here, she attended an In-Depth Conference, at which she met Carl Selle. Before leaving the conference, Carl asked her to write an article for The Doorstep sharing how she came to faith. She has been receiving The Doorstep ever since. PRAISE THE LORD!!!

Our marvelous, loving God has a purpose for each of us and through His miracles brings us together here and in The Kingdom to come.

P.S. A week after our reconnection, she joined the IFC Zoom Bible study class and plans to attend as often as she can. †

LWML CONFERENCE OFFERING SUPPORTS ISM SITE

Mary Craaybeek
LWML member, Sturgis, MI

My connection to ISM ministry grew in an interesting way. From my years as a teacher, I knew that it was challenging for both Spanish speaking students and their parents to gain the literacy skills they needed to succeed. When I retired I volunteered through our local literacy council to help a Spanish mom gain reading and writing skills. Through my friendship with her, my heart developed a soft spot for international student ministry. I already knew through a friend how the International Friendship House in East Lansing blesses international graduate students. I wondered how I might help ministry among internationals to grow in other places as well.

As I helped our Michigan District LWML plan our conference in 2022, we were looking for different LCMS groups in Michigan to which we might donate the offerings taken during worship

(“Reports” — Continued from page 1)

It was my first experience for me and now it’s one of my precious memories of studying abroad. Thanks for all the time giving me a wonderful American cultural experience!”

**International Friendship Center,
Madison WI**

Wayne Weiss

We sponsored a Thanksgiving Dinner with over eighty internationals representing Argentina, Taiwan, Columbia, Hungary, China, India, Iran, South Korea and Jordan. Volunteers from the Lutheran Church of the Living Christ joined them to feast on traditional Thanksgiving fare. The internationals of course loved the food and the interaction with Americans. The added bonus was the help and assistance of thirty-eight congregation members who served as table hosts, drivers, servers and providers of many side dishes. None of the twenty-eight table hosts specifically volunteered for the position. All were individually asked and accepted. Most



services. I contacted Pastor Cerchez at the new ISM site in Allendale, Michigan, affiliated with St John Church. They applied to be a recipient of one of the offerings and were selected. I pray that more LWML Districts, zones and groups will share their time, talents and treasures with ISM sites near and far.

Pastor Marin Cerchez
St. John Lutheran Church
Grand Valley State University MI

In Aug 2022, American Christian students from Campus Lutherans set up a table at the Campus Life Night organized by the university. We didn’t know what the Lord would bring as these students connected with both American and international students who passed by.

God brought a strong connection with a group of students from Kenya

of those had minimal experiences with internationals. All of them were very happy they had been asked and thoroughly enjoyed the evening.

ISM St. Louis

Sharon Riordan

I wish you all could have attended our Thanksgiving Dinner. We had an overflow crowd of over 110. We had about one American to every four international students. The students were from Washington University, Maryville University, St. Louis University and the University of Missouri, St. Louis. There were also a number of young families from our Mom and Baby Playtime Group. My favorite part of the day is when a brief quiz about the first Thanksgiving leads to a time of sharing WHY the Pilgrims came to the New World. We also briefly share that they invited the Native Americans, not to thank them, but to join with them in thanking God. We close by singing, “Now Thank We All Our God” together. †



A group of students visit Lake Michigan

who study Computer Science and Cyber Security. They have invited other international students to attend St. John, some of whom are not yet Christian. About 10 international students now attend worship and one sings solos and duets in our worship services. Our goal is to help the international students connect with and develop relationships with both American students and Christian families who can encourage them in their relationship with Christ.

The gift from the Michigan District LWML offering has enabled us to buy some Christian books for the students. We have also taken them to Lake Michigan, and have organized a Christmas party. Some of them are learning to use our audio video studio. We are thankful that Mary connected us to this funding opportunity and pray that God will continue to open doors for us to connect with even more international students. †



MLC Dinner – ISM Grant Reports

International Student Ministry *prayer* January/February 2023

For the start of the new semester

- May God open the doors for ISM sites and individual Christians to connect with and warmly welcome the thousands of international students and scholars who will arrive in the US in early January.
- May the Holy Spirit prompt curiosity and questions about spiritual matters in the lives of international students and may they turn to Christian classmates, acquaintances, friends, and total strangers to seek answers.
- May all Christians who have contact with international students be wholesome witnesses in word and deed.
- May God guide ISM site leaders and volunteers as they plan and facilitate Bible studies, ESL classes and conversation groups, and other activities that help international students connect with Christ.

Bessie Fick

ISM Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, Trinity Lutheran

- That the Lord would guide us to opportunities to invite students to church and Bible studies and to opportunities to speak of our hope in Christ.
- That the Welcome Meal for international students in January will provide opportunities for us to connect with students.

Marcia Mitwede

University Lutheran Chapel, Austin, Texas

- Thank the Lord for the wonderful volunteers in our ministry and the opportunities we have to serve the international community.
- Ask the Lord to guide in classes and activities for this semester.
- Ask the Lord to continue to give us open doors to proclaim the Gospel.

Upcoming Conferences

- For God to bring together a committee to work on the In-Depth Bible Seminar May 2023 and another to work on the Equipping Conference May or June 2023.

- For wisdom in planning for these two events and for God to prepare those who will attend.
- For Sue as she shares the vision for reaching international students and scholars at the Best Practices in Ministry Conference in Phoenix Az. February 16-18.

General

- Pray that all people would come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ for their eternal salvation in heaven because Jesus died for their sins.
- May all of us look for ways to connect well with international students and scholars, listening to them, learning from them, following up on concerns they mention, and having wisdom about connecting parts of their stories to God's story of grace, salvation and hope.
- Praise God for the book of Devotions being put together by Karol Selle using stories from eight ISM leaders and volunteers. Praise God for all who have contributed to this. Pray that it will be a blessing to all who read it after its release at the LWML Convention.
- Praise God for the support given by LWML at national, district and local levels to ISM Inc.
- Pray that LWMLs at all levels will continue to share their time, talents, and treasures with international students and with ISM groups near them.

Connecting on special days

- May God guide each group planning Valentines Day activities in ways to share about God's value of marriage, God's grace for healing troubled marriages, and the immeasurable love he has for each person he has created.
- Praise God for the opportunities there are to invite international students and scholars to attend special services on Ash Wednesday (February 22) and into Lent.
- May God grant courage and grace for Christians who have been connecting with an international student for some months to first mention

these services and this season of repentance, and then invite their friend to perhaps join them.

- May God help all of those who invite internationals to a church service to take time to explain aspects of the service in the days before they attend, and to spend time after the service answering their many questions.

Christ Centered Grants

- Praise God for the many international students and scholars who were blessed by the Thanksgiving Dinners hosted by the International Friendship Center in Madison, the International Student Ministry of St. Louis, the International Student Ministry of Pittsburgh and other places.
- Pray that the Christians who met international students at those meals would continue to send them texts, meet with them and develop longer term relationships.
- Pray for the Chinese New Year event that will offer opportunities for building relationships and sharing truths about Christ hosted by Messiah Lutheran Church and Chinese Mission of Santa Cruz, Ca.
- Pray for wisdom in purchasing and distributing Christian resources to international students for University Lutheran Chapel in Boulder, Co., Redeemer Lutheran Church in West Lafayette, In. Campus Lutheran Church in Columbia, Mo., and International Student Ministry at Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville.
- Pray that the several relationship building dinners with students from India planned by Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Pittsburg would serve to deepen relationships and open doors for sharing about Christ.
- Pray that the whiteboard camera purchased by International Friendship House in East Lansing, Michigan, would be a blessing to those who participate from around the world in Bible studies and ESL classes. †



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DoorstepNews

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*Happy
New Year* ★★

*May we suggest a New Year's Resolution to
contribute your stories to Doorstep News in 2023?*

We've been hearing amazing ways that people are connecting international students and scholars with the love of Christ. Please send in your articles, pictures and especially your prayer requests.

Please send your submissions for the March/April 2023 issue by email. The deadline is January 30, 2023 (but you can send them earlier!). Send your submissions to doorstep@isminc.org.

- See our privacy policy on our website
- Send your submission as a Word (or other text) document and images as separate files.
- Please include your name, your role, and the ministry and/or campus you serve.

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