

WHY A SOCCER GAME MATTERS

**AUGUSTA R. MENNELL, CAMPUS MINISTRY DIRECTOR
ALL SAINTS LUTHERAN CHURCH AND STUDENT CENTER, SLIPPERY ROCK**

All Saints Lutheran Church's first international student meal of the school year was a homemade Korean meal on Labor Day. Several Slippery Rock University soccer players spotted the sign outside of the church and student center and quickly agreed to come for the meal, their first at All Saints. They felt welcome and smiled with pleasure over Jo Dublin's excellent cooking.

We offered the students boxes of leftovers to carry back to their dorms, telling them our door was always open and we would be calling them soon. As they left, they called out: "Mrs. Mennell, come to our soccer game Wednesday." Because we always look for ways to get to know the students, my husband and I attended the game. We let them see that All Saints wants to be a family for them away from home.

At our meals, we invite students to share their phone numbers. Then we call and invite each student to a free lunch at a local restaurant. When I called the soccer players, I immediately identified myself as "the lady you talked to at the Labor Day meal." That's all it took. They relaxed and accepted the lunch invitation. Even if a student turns down an invitation to lunch, we see the phone call as an opportunity to listen

to them and develop a relationship. We tell them that the invitation remains open. Members of All Saints pray for each student we meet.

Building relationship is crucial to reaching out with faith. We meet as friends listen to what they believe and tell them what we Christians believe. Although it takes time to build relationships, the Holy Spirit works to plant and grow seeds of spiritual understanding. Relationships can grow through lunches, trips to see community sites, and rides to Walmart.

One soccer player who agreed to lunch was a student from Egypt. He met me at the Lutheran student center, met Rev. Jacob Deal, and was shown our sanctuary. He chose the restaurant and we walked there together. Conversation came so easily. He spoke of his childhood in Egypt, his loving parents, and his passion for soccer. He shared that he feels like a citizen of two countries and told of his desire to make his family proud of him. He believes Islam and Christianity are similar. I suggested we talk more about our faiths in the future. I also invited him to come see how we worship. After lunch, he invited me to his next soccer game. Jim and I went, of course. And the friendship grows.



prayer

SHARON OWENS CAMPUS MISSION COALITION, PHOENIX

PRAISE GOD FOR:

- The 70 international students who were able to join a fall break camp trip to Camp Aloma in Prescott Arizona
- Camp Aloma's dedication to sharing the gospel to all campers
- The safety of all students while canoeing, hiking, rock climbing, learning archery, participating in a ropes course, enjoying camp fires, transportation, etc., only a few small band aids were used

PRAY FOR:

- Continued influence of the gospel in students' lives
- Leadership team to continue to thrive, serve, and lead others
- Relationships that were formed to grow

PRAY FOR ISM, INC. MINISTRY CATALYST, SUE HASSELBRING

- Pray that Lutherans who have heard about ISM for the first time at the Best Practices Heartland Conference and LWML Zone Rallies this fall would begin intentionally reaching out to international scholars at universities near them.
- Wisdom for Sue in helping those who are starting ministry to international students for the first time or helping sites to restart their activities.
- Grace in communicating with district level leaders of the LCMS and LWML as she encourages them to increase intentional outreach to international scholars.
- Sensitivity to understand the needs of site leaders and volunteers and to respond with appropriate encouragement and resources.

PRAY FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MINISTRY

- That families across the US would open their homes so each international scholar and student who would like to, could experience Thanksgiving Day in a family's home.
- That God would guide each ISM site in planning Thanksgiving and Christmas activities and events so that international scholars feel welcome and have an opportunity to hear about God's graciousness to us, both in providing all we need, and in sending Jesus.
- That more LCMS members would experience the joy of nurturing friendships with international scholars.
- That international students who stay on campus over Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays would be contacted by and encouraged by their Christian friends.
- That LCMS congregations in the 24 states with no ISM sites would begin taking steps to intentionally reach out to international students.
- That each Afghan family resettling in the US would have six Christian friends.

with God
All things
are possible
MATTHEW 19:26

HARVEST MOON FESTIVAL

PASTOR FREEMAN LI
SANTA CRUZ CHINESE MISSION

China's Harvest Moon Festival is celebrated during the full moon of the eighth lunar month which was September 21 this year.

Eating moon cakes, carrying paper lanterns, and sharing meals with extended family are some ways to celebrate the festival.

Although Chinese scholars at University of California, Santa Cruz were far from family, 30 Americans and Chinese gathered at Messiah Lutheran Church to eat moon cakes, look at the moon through a telescope and meet outdoors.

Pastor Li of Santa Cruz Chinese Mission shared a brief devotion on Psalm 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows his handiwork," pointing to the wonder, power, and love of our Creator. Four days later, the Chinese Mission held their first face-to-face Mandarin worship service of 2021 with eight in attendance which increased to 19 the following week. What a blessing to worship once again with other members of Christ's body.



pray

Praise God for the six Chinese students who visited Messiah for the first time during the Moon Festival.

Pray that Chinese students would feel comfortable attending other events offered by Messiah and the Chinese Mission.

Pray that each ISM site would find ways to connect Biblical truths to cultural festivals to build mutual understanding and point us all toward Christ.

IN DEPTH BIBLE STUDY

InDepth Bible Study has transformed the lives of many internationals over the past 20+ years. Please begin to consider which internationals affiliated with your ministry you might be blessed by attending InDepth 2022. JJ Voelker (ISM Inc. President) and Sue Hasselbring (Ministry Catalyst) are looking for others to join them in developing plans for the InDepth Bible Study for internationals who are believers or have been studying God's Word for at least six months (prior to May). If you would like to be involved in the planning, contact them.



LOOKING AHEAD

CHRIST IS COMING!

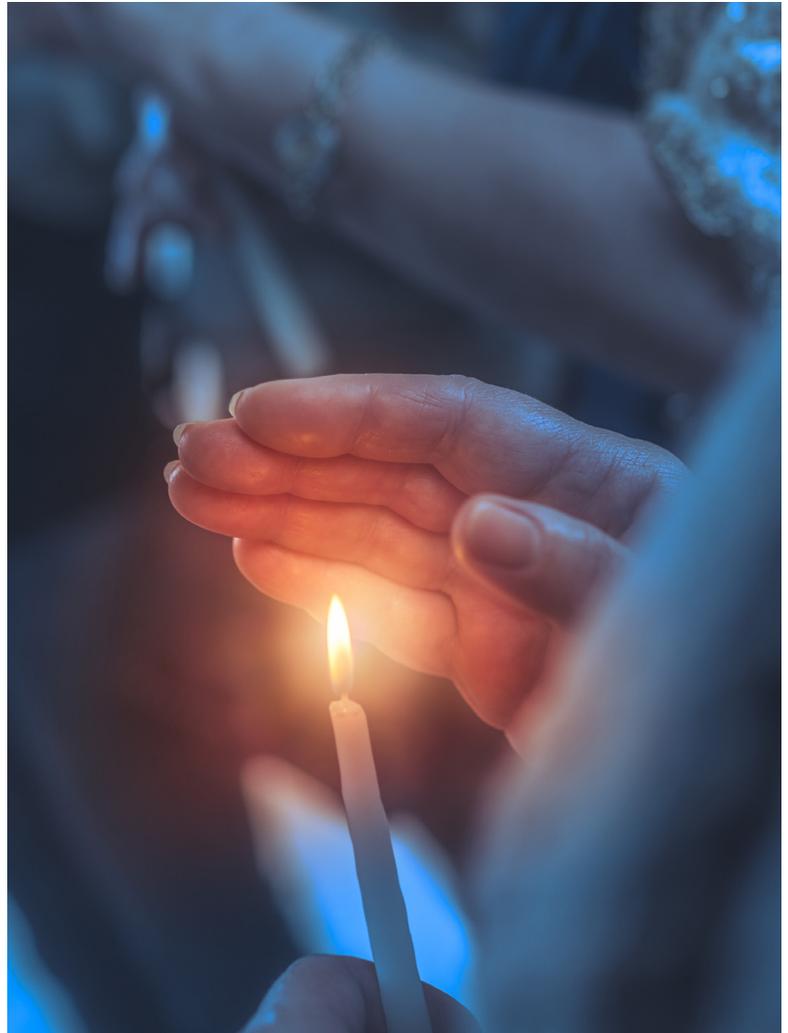
SUE HASSELBRING
ISM,INC MINISTRY CATALYST

Advent and Christmas are weeks away and most universities close well before Christmas day. What are some ways we have shared and can share Christ's coming with international students? These glimpses from the past may prompt new ideas for you this year:

- A tour of a church to see Christmas decorations and hear a gospel focused explanation of the decorations and the church windows. (Detroit, MI)
- Joining the congregation's youth for Christmas caroling followed by a dinner. One student read a Bible passage in her own language during the Christmas Eve service. (Conway, AR)
- A Christmas Open House shares the background and meaning of Jesus' birth. The event included Christmas cookies, songbooks of carols, information sheets with explanation of all the Christian Christmas symbols, and showing a Christmas DVD from Lutheran Hour Ministries in Mandarin with English subtitles. (Columbia, MO)
- No Christmas event, to encourage friendship families to invite students to a variety of family Christmas events. The hope is that deeper and more personal sharing about Christmas may happen one one one. (St. Louis, MO)
- Give *The Coming*, a bilingual Arabic/English art book to Arabic speaking students and explore it together during November and December. It is filled with prophesies of the coming of Christ and the story of his birth. Note: the pages turn Arabic style (which seems backwards to us). Here is a link to order:

<https://rachelpearsey.myshopify.com/products/the-coming-hope-of-all-nations>

Featured articles that point to a way your site might engage with students in the coming months. We hope these are a blessing to those new to sharing with international students as well as our seasoned volunteers.



Which of these might you or your group adopt or adapt? May the joy of Christ fill you and yours and spread to many others this season.

ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER

SUE HASSELBRING, ISM, INC MINISTRY CATALYST

The apostle Paul describes the church of God as “Building itself up in love by the proper working of each individual part” (Ephesians 4:16b). I believe this applies to International Student Ministry as well. We are an amazing network of people serving through God’s grace. We are international students, prayer partners, donors, staff, volunteers, committee members, and board members. Many of us serve at the local level while a handful serve at national level. All of us together join in a common mission to “encourage and equip God’s people for intentional Gospel ministry among international student communities.”

Paul’s description of the church of God being a body in 1Corinthians 12 applies to us also: “There are different ministries, but the same Lord. And there are different activities, but the same God works all of them in each person... the body is not one part but many... God has arranged each one of the parts in the body just as he wanted... God has put the body together... so that... the members would have the same concern for each other. So if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. (Excerpts from verses 5-6, 14, 18, 24, 25, 26).

"By God's grace I desire, and I believe you desire too, to build up others; international students, volunteers, prayer partners, board members and staff."

None of us leads, but rather Christ, so Paul encourages us “let us grow in every way into him who is the head—Christ. From him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building itself up in love by the proper working of each individual part.”

By God’s grace I desire, and I believe you desire too, to build up others; international students, volunteers, prayer partners, board members and staff. However, it can feel overwhelming. Rest now and listen slowly to these tiny phrases “from him”, “the same Lord”, “God works all of them”, “God has arranged”, “him who is the head—Christ”. May we rest in and find strength in him, for his grace is sufficient.



JOIN OUR TEAM!



THANK YOU CORRESPONDENT

Send thank you letters (composed by another volunteer) to 30 to 40 people who donate to ISM Inc. each month. If possible, also enter donations into a spreadsheet. Please email Sue Hasselbring at sue@isminc.org if interested in serving in this position.

THRIVENT MEMBERS

Thrivent members, please assist ISM Inc. and local ISM sites in two ways. Direct your Thrivent Choice dollars to ISM Inc. by logging into your account at <https://www.thrivent.com/> and choosing ISM Inc. of Stevens Point, WI or your own local ISM group. Get in touch with your local Thrivent Action Team, asking them to provide a grant for the next activity of your local ISM group. More details online and in the next Doorstep newsletter.



BOARD POSITIONS

Board members meet virtually at least three times a year and face to face once a year. All board members call several ISM sites to provide encouragement and learn about their activities and needs. Specific Board positions needed:

District Mission Executive - serves as a liaison between ISM, Inc. and the LCMS district mission executives, communicating the work and opportunity of ISM, Inc.; and networking with districts to start new intentional ISM, Inc. sites.

Development Coordinator - to guide the board and staff in developing and maintaining strong relationships with all donors and potential donors.

Public Relations - provide guidance, coordination and support to all public relations work of ISM Inc. at the national level.

If you are willing to serve in any of these roles or if you would like to recommend someone for one of these positions, please email JJ Voelker at jvoelker@kent.edu.