

## College is tough. People need Jesus. We're helping!

### 2024 Campus Ministry Retreat

This was different – a *working* retreat!

At last year's annual CID campus ministry retreat, students heard a presentation from Dr. Ken Schurb of the District office on Evangelism in the book of Acts. But on March 9, 2024, this year's retreat participants got involved in evangelism.

They conducted a neighborhood canvass for the only new church start in the District. Immanuel Lutheran Chapel in Springfield conducts services in the "red building" on the District office property. So canvassers were visiting people who live around the District office.

A total of 11 from Eastern Illinois and Illinois State participated, including those accompanying the students. Leading the retreat was Rev. Martin Herzberg, Executive Director of Ongoing Ambassadors for Christ, an organization which has helped many LCMS congregations with such canvassing since 1970. Four other experienced adults from OAF (two from Illinois, one from Missouri, and one from Ohio) also traveled to Springfield to assist.

Immanuel Lutheran Church in Springfield began conducting services in CID's red building just as COVID restrictions were lifting in May of 2021. At the time, it was not feasible to go from door to door and speak with people. Volunteers from Our Savior and Trinity, Springfield, including several Lutheran High School students, simply hung information packets on doorknobs. Still, one new lady came to church after just that contact!

The personal touch stands out as better, of course. So on March 9, the idea was to speak with people, identify prospects, and if possible give a brief witness to Christ as Savior before leaving their doorstep.

Canvassers actually spoke with 50 people on that Saturday afternoon, yielding three prospects for follow-up by Immanuel and its pastor, Rev. James Stuenkel. Additionally, canvassers left materials for 76 others who did not come to the door. These materials included announcements of Immanuel's Holy Week and Easter services.

By the end of canvassing, everyone was warming to the task at hand. Even students who may have seemed reluctant at first were participating, and excitedly reporting back about the visits they had made.

Thanks to central Illinois Church Extension Fund for supporting not only the retreat but also subsequent evangelism consultations that Rev. Herzberg and Dr. Schurb had first with CID Evangelism Commission, then with Springfield area pastors at their monthly conference. CEF's board chairman, Darin Gehrke, also took the canvassers out for an appreciative CEF-funded meal at a Springfield restaurant on Saturday evening.

"This was a great event," Dr. Schurb observed. "It showed that, despite rumors, door-to-door evangelistic canvassing is not dead. It also provided a fine opportunity for the college students. If they can speak about Christ with people they have never met, as they did, they can certainly do so with a roommate or classmate back on campus."

Please save us future stamps! Send your e-mail address to [amyholmes@cidlcms.org](mailto:amyholmes@cidlcms.org)

To donate to endowments for Central Illinois District campus ministry:

<https://www.lutheranlegacyfoundation.org/fund/central-illinois-district-campus-ministry/>

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### Why Evangelistic Activity – On or Off Campus?

At the close of an evangelism workshop, a pastor raised his hand. He noted that there had been talk all morning about ways and means – the *how* of telling the Good News about Jesus. Yet he did not want the time together to end without a word about the *why*. He was right!

The *why* arises from the *Good News* itself, “the kind of doctrine that teaches what a man who has not kept the Law and is condemned by it should believe, namely, that Christ has satisfied and paid for all guilt and without man’s merit has obtained and won for him forgiveness of sins, the ‘righteousness that avails before God,’ and eternal life” (FC Ep V 5). How could we NOT tell it?

One evangelism leader used to say that in previous years he had tried to motivate people for evangelism by the Law, telling them they had to get out there and do it. They just had to. But, this man went on, recently he had started motivating people for evangelism with the Gospel – he told them *how* to do it. Unhappily, however, telling people *how* to do anything amounted to more Law. It does not proclaim peace with God because of Him Who lived and died for us and rose again.

One of our worst pitfalls in evangelism would be to forget that the *News* that is *Good* for everyone else is *Good* for us too, and for the same reason, Christ. Yet when we cling to this truth, then in Luther’s words: “There is a spirit of restlessness amid the greatest calm, that is, in God’s grace and peace” (AE 24, 88). We can have peace with God in our consciences even while we remain restless to get His Good News out to others.

This is *why* CID had a working evangelistic campus ministry retreat. (See other side.)

### Changes in CID Campus Ministry at the Immanuels

This past December 10, Pastor Christopher Hull was installed at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Macomb, after a vacancy in that congregation’s pastoral office of more than four years’ duration. Not only church members but also many alumni and friends of Western Illinois University campus ministry had been waiting and praying for this day for a long time! Pastor Hull is eagerly getting started with ministry to WIU students, faculty, and staff members. He brings abundant energy and good ideas with him.

This coming June, Pastor Kenneth Hoover of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Charleston, will retire after 41 total years in active, full-time ministry. Almost the last 21 of these years have been at Immanuel, Charleston, where he has engaged in campus ministry for Eastern Illinois University. Please pray for him as he opens a new chapter in life. Pray also for the congregation, which presently has a committee narrowing down recommendations for the next pastor to call.

Unlike the campus ministries at the larger University of Illinois and Illinois State University, for EIU and WIU there are “town-gown” arrangements in which the Central Illinois District has partnered with congregations close to campus to provide support for campus ministry. One of the characteristics of campus ministry at EIU and WIU is that students are welcomed into congregations not composed basically of other students, but rather churches that resemble what they are used to at home, with members of all ages.

“Immanuel” means “God with us.” He is with college students in part thru the people of two Immanuel churches here in central Illinois.

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