

Come In When You Want To

One day All Saints will have a new campus ministry director and the rewarding time that I have had in helping students will come to an end. When that new person arrives, she will probably ask me what my schedule is. I'll have to tell her that I don't really have a daily schedule. I don't use a schedule because I have always depended on whomever God sends. For more than thirty years this has always produced results for me.

An example of how I work came when I picked up the phone to call an international student from Nepal to invite him to have lunch with me. He immediately agreed and then told me I had called at just "the right time." He needed help right then to get his car started so that he could tutor a friend's child. He thought the car's battery was dead, so he asked to borrow my battery cables if I had them. We don't have battery cables, but I quickly made several phone calls to find someone who could bring battery cables to him. This took time, but it was well worth it. He was so appreciative of the kindness shown that it opened the door to more sharing of the Gospel.

His call for help was unscheduled, but it fit perfectly into my day. More than that, it gave an opportunity for conversation the next week when we would meet for lunch. He will leave in November when he graduates and moves to Philadelphia to attend Temple University. This would be one of our last times to have a personal conversation. Since he now trusts me, I'll invite him to read a useful evangelism tool. It is a short yet fascinating paperback book called How Good Is Good Enough? by Andy Stanley. It analyzes the reasoning behind "works" religions and demonstrates how faulty such reasoning is. It is an excellent tool when working with Buddhists, Muslims and Hindus. And, in the last chapter, Stanley clearly explains the Gospel's free gift of salvation which "works" religions do not offer. This book will introduce him to the Gospel.

Recently an international lady who is not a student called to ask if she could come in to visit. She is from a country close to India. She is married to a professor who teaches at SRU. He did his graduate work in North Dakota, where she discovered that Christians are "very kind." When she arrived in Slippery Rock a year ago, she and her small daughter approached All Saints' booth at the annual village festival held in "downtown" Slippery Rock. She was very pleased when my husband, who was helping man our booth, introduced himself and told her where our church is located. He told her about our great rummage sale going on which she would probably enjoy.

That was the beginning of our relationship. She has come to visit often because her life is quite lonely. When she called, I invited her to come over. When she came, I suggested we spend the afternoon visiting the Amish stores in New Wilmington so that she could get out of the house. It turned out to be a special time to be together. We have not talked religion because she's not ready. All I know is that she is a Muslim who wants to stay Muslim, but welcomes friendship.

Unscheduled? Yes. Productive? Probably, because the Holy Spirit will show her that All Saints has more than kindness to share. But it must be in God's time. I don't use a schedule; I depend on the Holy Spirit to help me assist those who need spiritual guidance.

Not all things at All Saints are unplanned and unscheduled for me. A planned highlight is the Bible class I get to have with two American SRU students who come in weekly to study the Bible, currently the book of Romans. They come in rain or shine because they really want to know what the Bible teaches. We got to know them when we met them at SRU's orientation for new students. They are from different Christian denominations, but are both determined to learn what the Bible teaches. From these studies they will determine which denomination will be theirs. Even if they cannot come to study on Friday afternoons, they never skip, but always ask to reschedule for a time earlier in the day. The study time is the highlight of their week, and it is mine, too. What deep satisfaction to share God's Word.

Life has many interruptions and unplanned events. The unscheduled calls which come to campus ministry are often the best. I remember Kenzaburo from Japan asking if we would have time to teach him about the Bible. That led to his baptism.

All Saints thanks God for these unscheduled times when the Holy Spirit will open doors to faith.

Augusta R. Mennell

Campus Ministry Director

All Saints Lutheran Church and Student Center

Slippery Rock, PA 06157