



The NEXUS Institute “What Now” 2023 Recap

The NEXUS Institute recently wrapped up its 2023 week of focusing on “What Now?” Jesus died, was buried, and rose again. Disciples then (and now) ask, “What Now?” We had daily themes from Matthew chapter 28 of “Do Not Be Afraid,” “Go and Tell,” “Jesus Has All Authority,” “Go and Make Disciples,” and “I Am With You.” Read more to check out what we did!

This summer’s institute, generously sponsored by the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) brought youth for a week of on-campus learning and growing in faith and calling, and a fantastic experience of intentional Christian community with each other and their college mentors. We had 15 students participate, coming to us from seven states and Canada. We had eight college-age mentors, five of which are Grand View students.

Our first theology class, taught by the Rev. Dr. Mark Mattes and sponsored by Lutheran Bible Institute, focused on the book of Jeremiah. Our second class, taught by the Rev. Dr. Ken Jones and sponsored by 1517, consisted of lessons revolving around Paul’s letters to the early Church. Evening Ministry Labs focused on engaging others in conversation, cherishing and leaning into our church families, discernment (general and specific to vocational ministry), sacred pathways of connecting and feeling close to God, and p(r)aying attention.

Each afternoon, we focused on community fellowship by going on adventures in the area. This summer, we enjoyed Game-a-palooza on campus (4-square in the air was a hit!), the Des Moines Art Center, a pool day, Jordan Creek Mall, and Adventureland. Participants enjoyed riding Hope+Elim Church’s school bus (while singing at the top of their lungs) and seeing more of the area.

NEXUS Late Night, our talk show where those who work or have worked in vocational ministry are interviewed, was a hit again this year! This summer’s guests were Jeff Morlock (Pastor, Dir. Of Vocational Discernment at the North American Lutheran Seminary), Kate Faas (NEXUS Director), Luke Ratke and Ethan Zimmerman (current NEXUS mentors and seminarians), Teresa Peters (Pastor, Dir. Of Youth and

Family for the NALC), Bob Speirs (Pastor), and Dr. Rachele Keck (Grand View's new president). Participants got to ask questions of each interviewee, and contact information was provided to the many participants who desired further conversations with our passionate and exemplar visitors.

One of our joys at NEXUS is to faithfully worship first thing in the morning and as the last thing at night. Both services took place in Luther Memorial Church's beautiful sanctuary. Each included a call to worship, prayer, singing, and a message. Morning worship featured talented piano players and hymns, and evening worship was led by Levi Faas and a band of musicians and included Communion in a more contemporary style. Mentors started off assisting in leading portions of worship, and the high school participants enthusiastically stepped up in those leading roles the rest of the week.

Each college mentor had 2-3 participants as their mentees for the week, encouraging them and helping them navigate the week. Small group time happened in the morning after classes and again in the evening, with groups spreading out around the church and campus to discuss class topics and whatever else came up naturally. This year we continued to incorporate beginning evening small groups with the St. Ignatius' Daily Examen, a time of quieting oneself, reflecting on one's day, and listening for the still, small voice of the Lord. There was a lot of laughter, many in-depth conversations, stories shared and heard, and a few tears shed through small group time. It was a blessing to see the students bonding, sharing, pointing each other to Jesus, and praying for each other.

"I wasn't sure I wanted to come, but I am so glad I did. This week restored my relationship with God and helped me better hear my future call as a pastor. This was the best week of my life! Can I come back next year??" – First time participant

"Never in my life will I forget this life-changing experience here at NEXUS – honestly it has brought me so much. Thank all of you who joined me for an amazing week that I will remember and cherish always and forever. Praise Jesus!" – First time participant

This summer's week of intentional learning and community came with many comments like the ones above. It was a life-changing week where the Holy Spirit was at work in and among us. We are SO thankful to our generous sponsors: the Lilly Endowment; Grand View University; Luther Memorial Church of Des Moines, IA; the North American Lutheran Church; Lutheran CORE; 1517; the Lutheran Bible Institute; Rasmussen Group; and our individual sponsors. Without support, NEXUS would not be possible. We value our ongoing partnerships as we raise up future Lutheran church leaders of tomorrow. THANK YOU for your prayers and support of The NEXUS Institute. Stay tuned for plans for our 2024 institute, and be sure to check out pictures on Facebook & Instagram!

With Humility & Awe,



Kate Faas, Director of The NEXUS Institute

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