

## **Grace Place Campus Ministry at Northern Illinois University Report for Northern Illinois Synod Assembly**

Grace Place Campus Ministry has entered a new chapter in their ministry to the Northern Illinois University Huskies. This past fall, the Board of Directors voted to call Pastor Mack Patrick to be the next Campus Pastor. The Board saw Pastor Mack as a humble and hopeful leader that could and has ministered to a diverse campus community, sharing God's faithfulness and life-altering love. The Board of Directors would like to extend a sincere thank you to Pastor Bob Hansen for serving as the Interim Campus Pastor during the two-year transition.

This year Grace Place has focused on building an intentional, authentic community that supports one another. Centered around Micah 6:8, "Simply do justice, love kindness, and humbly walk with your God," Grace Place continued to partner with First Lutheran Church in DeKalb to provide sack lunches on the corner of Lucinda and Normal Avenues, in front of the Grace Place Center, each Monday. The program "Lunches-to-Go" is a staple in our community, and we are excited to continue to provide this program each week during the academic year.

On Tuesday evenings, our community gathers to share in a meal graciously donated by area congregations and to worship together. We give thanks to First Lutheran, DeKalb; Bethlehem Lutheran, DeKalb; Salem Lutheran, Sycamore; Our Savior's Lutheran, Rockford; Faith Lutheran, Rochelle; and St. Paul's Episcopal, DeKalb. Without their continuous support, we would not have been able to do our weekly programming. During the Spring semester, our community began using a dinner church model and saw excitement from our students about combining the meal and worship. We are sad that our semester was cut short due to the campus closure, but we will continue to offer a weekly meal and worship when we are able to gather again in the fall.

One of the new adventures that Grace Place has ventured into is partnering with the Inclusive Collective, the United Methodist Campus Ministry at NIU, on their weekly meal, Hungry Huskies. Each Sunday night we gather in the Holmes Student Center and provide a free meal for up to 100 students. We are grateful for the partners who have helped with this meal this past fall and spring, and we are excited to see this program continue to grow and provide a warm meal to hungry students.

No one could have imagined that our Spring would look this way: the NIU campus quiet, our students ~~are~~ dispersed and our building empty. But the ministry of Grace Place continues! In these uncertain times we are being creative with how we connect with our students and the wider community. We look forward to being back with each other come this fall.

Thank you to the congregations and individuals who have financially supported Grace Place this past year. The gifts we have received enable us to do meaningful ministry both in person and virtually.

Submitted with hopefulness,

The Grace Place Campus Ministry Board of Directors and Pastor Mack Patrick

