

# New York City Mission Trip 2017

Peace Lutheran Campus Center · Stevens Point, WI

## Jesus is Waiting in New York

This year, nine Peace students and two longtime supporters of Peace's campus ministry anxiously awaited the start to the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point's spring break. After waiting for the preparations and arrangements to be made, the team traveled through the middle of the night to arrive at Milwaukee Airport for our early morning flight to New York City. After waiting to check in, waiting in line for security, and then finally waiting at the gate, the time had come to board the plane and take off for our week of service and learning. The wait was over, or so we thought.

Once in New York, we discovered that the weeks of waiting leading up to the trip had been a valuable gift in teaching us patience; because, as we learned, no one travels quickly in New York. As we moved throughout the city, we did so via van, taxi, bus, subway, and even by ferry. Each mode of transportation came with its own form of waiting – whether it was in street traffic or during the numerous public transit stops as we journeyed within the borough of Queens, from Queens to Staten Island and/or Manhattan. However, we didn't have to wait long to start being the hands and feet of Jesus.

Our time of service at Martin Luther School was received with great enthusiasm by the headmaster, Randy Gast, as we worked hard scrubbing and scrapping clean various parts of the building. The same was true of Pastor Johnson Rethinasamy of Immanuel Lutheran Church as we sorted, cleaned, and helped organize parts of the fellowship hall and school. These fellow workers in the kingdom were overjoyed to no longer wait for their long overdue projects to be completed. What a blessing it was for our team to offer them encouragement through our ministry of service.

Another major task our team had an opportunity to partake in was helping St. Matthew's of Staten Island and Pastor Philip Sawyerene canvass. As we ventured out into the surrounding neighborhood, we did so with anxious hearts waiting for doors to be opened and hearts to hear our invitations of Good News. Even though hundreds of doors remained closed, new faces appeared to St. Matthew's within hours of our first seeds being planted to speak with



One World Trade Center as seen from the Staten Island Ferry



Front Row (L to R): Mitchell Beilke, Melissa Wood, Anna Lutz, Andrew Friend  
Back Row (L to R): Ida Frizzell, Johan Aulwes, Colin Welch, Sierra Mathieu, Emily Hammann, Scott West, Kaylie Cartwright

Pastor. What a blessing it was for our team to experience the wait after knocking on doors and seeing the members of St. Matthew's encouraged once again.

Finally, after discussing with each other about all the waiting that takes place in a city of 8 million people, we were reminded during Immanuel's Lenten service that Jesus too is waiting. He is ready and waiting for those who don't yet know him. And He is waiting for each of us, His baptized children, to share His Gospel message with New Yorkers and even members

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of our own communities. A message that reminds each of us that the wait for our forgiveness was completed on Calvary's cross; a message and seed of hope that when nurtured can grow to become a blessing and encouragement to all those whom are waiting. What a blessing it was for our team to tell others that the wait is over because Jesus is alive and well in New York.

After Note: During our time in New York the team also got the chance to learn about several religious groups and visit their places of worship. This was a tremendous learning experience as many of these groups are not as prevalent in Wisconsin as they are in New York. These places included: a Greek Orthodox Church, a Hindu Temple, a Buddhist Temple, and Islamic Mosque.

## Team Reflections

Below are quotes taken throughout the week of service. We were truly blessed to have had the opportunity to serve and are thankful for your support!

Today I learned first-hand that God takes care of the details so that we don't need to worry. The situations that He presents to us, the people He introduces us to, the challenges He puts before us, are all part of a master plan to which we have been called, and for which He has prepared us. Today I felt the peace of God as I worked with others to spread the news about St. Matthew. The worry was gone because I stopped worrying about the details, exactly what I was going to say and do, and left it up to God. He guided my words and actions and made them fruitful. —Anna

Today was most certainly a stretching experience for my faith if I've ever seen one. The idea of going door to door seemed intrusive and caused concern about rejection or confrontation. However, the experience was so much more than I ever could have hoped for at the start. This day made me a lot less afraid to share my faith with others and will influence the way that I evangelize the rest of my life.—Sierra

I've grown so much in my faith. Seeing the effort and time the Atlantic District puts into these small missions really gives me hope and inspiration. So much love is put into New York by Lutherans, and although the return is small, they keep trying. Seeing the spirit working through all these people reminds me of my mission as a Christian. Not to judge or hate, but to spread the good news to everybody I can.—Colin

This trip has allowed me to experience many forms of worship and learn about many lifestyles and cultures. I enjoyed sharing it with Pastor Johnson, Pastor Philip, and the members of Peace Lutheran. This is a trip I am thankful for and will not forget! —Andrew

This morning we learned more about the Greek Orthodox church. The rest of the day continued in a similar manner with us touring different religious spaces of different religions. We stopped at the Lutheran gathering space at Queens College. Next we went to a Hindi Temple, and Buddhist Temple, and a Mosque. The day was very eye-opening for me. I learned more about the beliefs of other religions. Knowing about other religions makes my faith stronger. —Kaylie

Today we got a whole lot of Jesus. We started our day by going to church at Immanuel, both the English and Tamil services. Hearing others worship in a different language was awesome. Getting to see other churches and their services allowed us to see how others worship the Lord through different means. —Melissa

Today we went out to Staten Island canvassing and it got me out of my comfort zone because I've never done that before. Once we were done with the day it was nice to hear that two people came to the church when we were canvassing, and they prayed with Pastor Phillip. It was a blessing to be able to outreach and spread the word of the Christ.—Mitchell

This trip has been very interesting and informational. Learning about city life and the diversity here has been exciting. Going to school in Stevens Point, I was aware that there is little diversity there. However, I greatly enjoy learning about diversity and being able to see it at large in places such as New York. —Johan

After a morning of no sleep (on our travel day), meeting Randy at Martin Luther School really motivated me. He was so thankful for our help which helped us to push through the tiredness and do our best efforts to help out and to remember we are here to serve others and not to serve ourselves.—Emily

