



The NEXUS Institute “Jesus Verbs” 2024 Recap

The NEXUS Institute recently wrapped up its 2024 week of focusing on the verbs of Jesus. Our God is a god of action. There’s nowhere we see this more clearly than the example of Jesus incarnate. We explored the many ways Jesus acted while on earth and how we can follow him. Our daily themes (verbs) were dwell, call, preach, pray, and love. Our daily themes came from verses from the gospels. 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 an energizing experience of intentional Christian community with each other and their college mentors. We had 14 students participate (some ran into flight issues with the Microsoft crash and could not attend), coming to us from nine different states. We had 6 college-age mentors, two 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 Ezekiel. Our second class, taught by the Dr. Leon Miles and sponsored by 1517, consisted of lessons on Jesus verbs primarily found in the gospel of John. Evening Ministry Labs focused on engaging others in conversation, discernment, vestments & liturgy, praying in color, and visitation. cherishing.

Each afternoon, we focused on community fellowship by going on adventures in the area. This summer, we enjoyed games on campus (4-square in the air is always a favorite), seeing “Inside Out 2” in theaters, shopped and perused Iowa’s largest mall, a pool day, and Adventureland. Participants enjoyed riding the Grand View Vikings bus and group singing was heard from time to time.

NEXUS Late Night, our talk show where those who work or have worked in vocational ministry are interviewed, was solid with pastors this summer. Guests were Pastors Matt Bahnfleth, Dawn Rister,

Christopher Staley, Tim Hummel, Dan Pennington, as well as Dr. Leon Miles. Participants asked questions of each interviewee, and contact information was provided to 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 (including some of our participants and mentors) in a more contemporary style and included Communion every night. Mentors started off assisting in leading reading portions of worship, and the high school participants enthusiastically stepped up in those 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 laughter, the braiding of hair, in-depth conversations, stories shared, and some tears shed through small group time. It is always a blessing to see the students bonding, sharing, pointing each other to Jesus, and praying for each other.

"I didn't fully believe when I went through confirmation. Now I am excited to affirm my baptism, and going through NEXUS opened my eyes to my call to be a theology professor." – New participant

"I was asked to help lead evening worship, and it was such a blessing. My home congregation is small and doesn't have enough people to form a worship band. I loved being able to share my gifts in a setting of musicians...and I've never heard a group of my peers sing so loud and wholeheartedly." – Returning 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; 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 2025 institute, and be sure to check out pictures on Facebook & Instagram!

With Joy & Gratitude,



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