In This Issue:

Matthew 25 Award 2
COVID policy 3
Employee Spotlight 5

Birthday Corner

November
16 Marlene Decker
17 Frt. Xuekai Shi, SVD

THE PRESIDENT  Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD

One bite at a time

Life can seem overwhelming at times – too many things to do, no time to get it all done. The last weeks of a semester put a lot of pressure on students, faculty and staff. There are meetings, papers, exams, recitals and presentations.

There are also quite a few commitments in student life. In the next two weeks, a marathon of celebrations is coming our way: Queen of the Americas sponsored by AHA, Christ the King with visitors from the Knights of Columbus, Matthew 25 to honor people who live out Jesus’ teaching to care for the marginalized, Thanksgiving, the Advent Luncheon and the Country Christmas celebration in Epworth. Plus, there are many smaller end-of-semester parties to keep in mind. Add in the ping-pong tournament, and the rehearsals, decorating, set-up and clean-up for the various events... we will be busy.

To complicate things still more, we are experiencing a rise in the number of COVID-19 infections, especially among our employees who work off-campus.

Two pieces of advice might help in the coming days.

First, St. Francis de Sales famously said: “Half an hour’s meditation each day is essential, except when you are busy. Then a full hour is needed.”

Second, though life gets complicated, the only way to go about it is “one bite at a time.” The little dinosaur in the picture seems determined to eat the huge pumpkin. There comes bite number one, then another, then another....

Go ahead, take a bite out of your day!

continued next page

Address: 102 Jacoby Dr SW, Epworth, IA 52045  Phone: (563) 876-3353 or info@dwci.edu
Matthew 25 Recipients: Dianne and Lloyd McDermott

The Matthew 25 Award was established at DWC in 2001 to honor those in or connected to the area, who minister in the spirit of the Gospel message put forth in Matthew 25:35-36: “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.”

On Tuesday, November 22, Divine Word College will present the Matthew 25 award for the 15th time to Dianne and Lloyd McDermott of Epworth.

Dianne and Lloyd have shared their home, their family, and their hearts to welcome many Divine Word College Students from around the world. In the past 24 years, the McDermotts have provided housing for 12 international students, including 10 who were enrolled at Divine Word College. With open arms and hearts, the couple taught students about American culture and gave them an immersive environment where they could practice their new English skills. In return, the McDermotts said the students taught them about the cultures of their own countries, which included Japan, South Korea, Haiti, France, the Philippines, Belarus and China. The couple is also an important part of the Friends Across Nations Club at Divine Word, serving as a surrogate American family of sorts to international students who live on campus.

Dianne is an Associate of the Sisters of the Presentation and volunteers at the Presentation Lantern Center. She teaches English and helps new immigrants acquire some “life skills” needed to make a home in Dubuque County. Dianne and Lloyd also volunteer their help at the Epworth Community Meal on many Friday mornings. They certainly know how to feed the hungry and welcome strangers.

Lloyd and Dianne’s charitable efforts extend outside of DWC and beyond Dubuque County, too. After retiring, Lloyd and Dianne decided they wanted to travel and leave a “footprint” behind wherever they went. Since then, they’ve worked with numerous organizations to pitch in after natural disasters and help people living in poverty both in the U.S. and abroad. During a trip to Haiti, Dianne met people who didn’t even have a roof over their heads. When she returned home, she organized an effort at St. Patrick’s Church in Epworth with the help of the St. Elizabeth Pastorate and managed to raise $17,000 to fund the construction of a building in that community in Haiti.

Lloyd said that as a boy, he didn’t understand why he needed to study geography because he knew he’d never go to any of the places on the world map. Today, he says the experiences of traveling and serving as a host family for international students has allowed him to feel more connected to world issues. Dianne agreed, saying that travel has a way of making the world smaller. “When you go to a country and you see their culture and you meet the people, you can’t look at it as just a place on a map anymore,” she said. “There are good people wherever you go.” The McDermotts have four children and 10 grandchildren but after many years of service and sacrifice, the love of their new extended family stretches across nations.
COVID-19 Vaccinations and Boosters

On November 11, the Board of Administration discussed the College policy regarding vaccinations and the bivalent boosters that protect against the newer Omicron variants. The following policy is a result of those discussions.

The College requires all students to be vaccinated for COVID-19 and to receive the bivalent booster. Exceptions are made for specific health situations.

The College strongly encourages all SVDs and employees (including faculty and staff) to be vaccinated and to receive the booster. Exceptions are made for specific health situations.

- For those who are vaccinated and boosted, if they nevertheless contract an infection of COVID-19, the use of PTO or vacation time WILL NOT be required for the days of isolation.
- For those who are not vaccinated and boosted, PTO or vacation time WILL be required for the days of isolation.

(This policy will be implemented beginning Monday, November 28, the first day regular work day after Thanksgiving Break).

The CDC recommends that everyone ages 5 years and older get an updated bivalent COVID-19 booster if it has been at least 2 months since your last booster or final primary. The updated booster provides broader protection against newer Omicron variants.

Two questions can be asked about the policy:

Why are boosters required for the students?

Students spend most of their day with one another: in the chapel, in the dining room, in the classrooms, in the Pour House and in the gym. On-campus students spend even more of their lives together. Their dorm rooms are close to one another, and they share common restrooms. COVID-19 or the flu could spread widely in the student community, but vaccinations/boosters clearly help to limit community spread. Currently, 42 of the 100 students are boosted, and 1 on-campus student is in isolation with a COVID-19 infection.

Why are boosters only strongly encouraged for SVDs and employees?

For SVDs, their living arrangements are more separated than those for students. Currently 20 of the 27 SVDs in residence are already vaccinated and boosted, 1 is in isolation with a COVID-19 infection.

For employees, it is not completely clear whether DWC can legally require vaccinations or boosters. However, DWC can strongly encourage employees in both word and through PTO/vacation adjustments. Today, 5 of the 45 employees who live off-campus, are in isolation for COVID-19 infections.

For those who do contract a COVID-19 infection, a minimum of six days of isolation from other College members is required. Upon return, facemasks and distancing are required up to the tenth day from the first positive test.

Thanks to all who have been vaccinated and boosted. Thanks too, to those who have received a flu shot for the current season. The shots do not make us invulnerable to disease, but they do help to reduce the severity of disease for the individuals, and the spread of virus diseases in the College.

More information on the availability of vaccine and booster providers can be found at https://www.dubuquecounty.org/covid19.
As you already know, we will be implementing a revised 5-year assessment plan in fall of 2023. Through interactions and exchanges with faculty it has become apparent that some might be interested in submitting revised rubrics for their signature assignments that are clearer, more focused, and that more specifically align with the assessed SLO/Core Competency. If you are interested in resubmitting a revised rubric, please do so within the next spring semester, so I can submit these updates to OAP (formerly known as AQUA) before the summer! If you’d like to talk more or need anything, please let me know!

Thanks

VICE PRESIDENT FOR FORMATION
DEAN OF STUDENTS
Fr. Long Phi Nguyen, SVD

Queen of Americas Celebration
The celebration of the Queen of Americas comes off this Saturday, November 19. The Mass is at 3 PM in the main Chapel and follow by the banquet. The celebration is still in honor of our lady of Guadalupe who is indeed the queen of Americas. The Americas here include North, Central and South.

Liturgy Prep
Liturgy Prep will be held on Thursday, November 17 at 1 PM in the main chapel to prepare for the Queen of the Americas celebration. All students are required to attend.

Matthew 25 Award
The Matthew 25 Award, which has been suspended for the past two years due to the Covid pandemic, is scheduled on Tuesday, November 22. The celebration will begin with Vespers @ 5.30 PM and the banquet at 6 PM in the dining room. All students are required to attend and the dress code is semi-formal or formal.

Thanksgiving Break
This year’s thanksgiving Break begins on Wednesday, November 23 until Sunday, November 27. As you know, thanksgiving is one the most important celebrations in American culture. It is a celebration that brings family and friends together to enjoy the presence of one another over food and drink. May this thanksgiving be an occasion of gratitude to God and to one another in the DWC community.
COVID information
As you know, the Board of Administration is strongly encouraging employees to get the bivalent vaccine also known as the Omicron-specific vaccine. We kindly ask that you send the V.P. for Operations the date when you received the bivalent/Omicron-specific vaccine. You do not need to produce a copy of your vaccine card. Just an email will suffice. If you are declining the bivalent vaccine please let me know.

Additional clarification: The term “bivalent” means that they target two strains of COVID-19: the original strain that first appeared in the U.S. in early 2020 and the Omicron subvariants BA. 4 and BA. 5 that emerged more recently in the summer of 2022. The news media has also referred to these updated boosters as “Omicron-specific.”

JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION COUNCIL

Prayer: We Are God’s Own Design
God, remind us that we need not fear when we serve.
Your intricate design protects us completely
so that we can go be present with the voiceless, defenseless.
You created our baffling bodies to heal themselves,
so that we can be your hands and feet in the world to heal others.
Amen.

DR. RON CONDON
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR - THEOLOGY

SKILL I’D LIKE TO MASTER
Playing the cello

FAVORITE VACATION SPOT
Joshua Tree National Park, California

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT
Being a good husband, son, and brother (I hope!)

COULDN’T LIVE WITHOUT
My wife, Maria

WHAT TAKES UP TOO MUCH OF YOUR TIME
Grading!

DIVINE WORD COLLEGE
EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

SURPRISING FACT
I used to be able to wiggle my eyes!