



# Ministry with college students at SUNY Oswego

By Shannon Hodson

Living a mere three blocks away from a college campus presented the perfect opportunity for a pastor to begin a ministry for college students. When he was appointed to Oswego First UMC in 2011, Pastor Yohang Chun began a Friday-night meal and bible study at the church parsonage for international students from SUNY Oswego. The program has continued each year with new students who learn of the small group primarily through word of mouth.

Pastor Chun is Korean as are many of the international students at SUNY Oswego. When Pastor Chun started the

program, he said “My wife cooks delicious Korean food. Many of the students missed home and their ethnic cuisine. My policy is to fill their stomach and their spirit.”

Each Friday, Pastor Chun leads the students through a bible study followed by a meal. Students who come to the Friday night gatherings are from many different backgrounds. Most, like Pastor Chun, are from South Korea. Students from other ethnic backgrounds, such as Indian and Chinese, have also attended. Many Christian backgrounds are represented, and some have never been to church.



Photo by Pastor Yohang Chun

*Over 50 Korean students from SUNY Oswego celebrated the Korean New Year celebration at Oswego First UMC earlier this year.*

Dong Gun Lee and his wife HyunJoo Ahn began attending the Friday night gatherings in the fall of 2016 when one of Dong Gun’s friends told him about the gatherings. He grew up Catholic in South Korea and his wife who was born and raised in a Baptist household in South Korea has since converted to Catholicism.

Dong Gun and HyunJoo’s five-month old son, Daniel, attends the gatherings with them. HyunJoo, who studies communications and hopes one day to become a psychologist, said, “It is so nice to get together with people who understand me and who share the same beliefs as me.”

Pastor Chun brings the international students together on other occasions as well. They have a large Thanksgiving

celebration as well as a Korean New Year celebration. They also volunteer at the Salvation Army twice a year, serving meals. Pastor Chun said, “It makes me happy to see how the students enjoy serving the community.”

Seeing how the program has been a success to international students, Pastor Chun has initiated a gathering for American college students this school year as well. He has asked Ray and Barbara Morrison to join and lead the American students at the parsonage on Friday nights. They met Pastor Chun when they began attending the Oswego First United Methodist Church in 2016. Barbara is a Registered Nurse and Ray is a business librarian at SUNY Oswego.

Barbara and Ray, who have two adult sons, are excited to have students in

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Photo by Shannon Hodson

*Korean and American students work on an icebreaker activity at the first Friday-night bible study for the Spring 2017 semester.*