Campus ministry changes location

By Pamela Powers
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MENOMONIE — Location, location, location.

That mantra, commonly espoused by real estate agents, also applies to The Ministry, a partnership of the Roman Catholic and Lutheran faiths that provides for the spiritual needs of UW-Stout faculty, students and staff.

The Ministry, previously at what was known as the "big blue house" at 108 3rd Ave. W. near the university's north campus, has been relocated to a former hot dog restaurant at 710 Second St. E. near the UW-Stout clock tower on the university's main campus.

"The blue house was wonderful," said Christine Warloski, director of the Newman, a part of the Menomonie Catholic community. "But it was never a drop-in place where students were walking past and would stop in. Here, literally, every student has to walk past this building.
"Every student has to go to Harvey Hall for general education classes and Bowman Hall is where admissions, advisement, registration and counseling are."

Remodeling of the former restaurant started in March. More than 120 volunteers put in about 2,500 hours assisting with the project. Among those helping was the Pounding Fathers, a group comprised of many retired UW-Stout faculty and staff.

Storefront windows at the new site allow for more visibility of The Ministry. Stained-glass windows hanging near the three offices are from the original Ministry home. The mantle over a gas fireplace also was moved from the blue house. A basement has been remodeled into a recreation room.

A full kitchen is on the main level because The Ministry hosts meals two nights a week during the school year.

"Students can come in during the day and hang out," Warloski said. "We're sponsored by the Catholics and the Lutherans, but we're open to everybody and everyone is welcome."

The nonprofit ministry is not affiliated with UW-Stout but has a close partnership with the university as it provides spiritual guidance to the campus community.

Tim Schroeder, Lutheran campus ministry director, said the remodeling really came together quickly because of the help of many volunteers.

"I'm excited for our new location as we look at our next chapter in The Ministry," he said. "I expect an exponential increase in foot traffic. At our old facility there was no visibility like this building."

The former Ministry house is currently being rented out by a property manager. It likely will be sold next summer, probably to UW-Stout, Warloski said.

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**If You Go:**

A grand opening at The Ministry’s new location, 710 E. Second St., will occur from 4 to 7 p.m. Thursday, including a 5 p.m. ribbon-cutting. A UW-Stout student-only grand opening is planned for 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 6.