



## **Student Spotlight: Joel Aarsvold**

After being aware of the MissionShift class for 20 years, I was able to attend this past fall. It was a good experience for me as we studied about many different cultures and the challenges urban communities face in our world. This class quickly reminded me how the world has changed during my lifetime. The phrase we use so often is “the mission field has moved to us”. Taking this class showed me many times how the mission field is right in the community around our church.

We read two books about the diversity of cultures and how to understand many issues these diverse groups face. The books challenged us to build relationships with people with backgrounds different from us. They also showed us how to develop steps to build cross-cultural friendships, providing practical resources for working in multicultural environments with sensitivity. Sharing our church building with the Ebenezer Oromo Evangelical Church, ICCM, and Every Tribe and Tongues is a good example of sharing practical resources.

Pastor Wells, serving as MissionShift Director, consistently emphasized that a biblical model of ministry has three interrelated areas: proclamation of the Gospel, meeting human needs, and developing personal relationships.

Seven guest speakers shared about specific cultures they have served, some in other countries and some locally. Also, representatives of nine neighborhood ministries came to share about their outreach. The students then selected one of the ministries to visit with the ministry’s leader and some staff members. One of the purposes of this visit was to observe the opportunities and challenges these ministries face. I was able to visit the Marie Sandvik Center. The Center has met the physical and spiritual needs of many people for 75 years. The director, Kristen Hink, said that the central purpose of the Marie Sandvik Center is to fulfill the Great Commission as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20.

In listening to the representatives of the neighborhood ministries, it is evident these individuals strive to work together and look to Pastor Wells for much encouragement and support as they all attempt to minister to the needs in the Phillips Neighborhood.

This class has challenged me to be sensitive to the needs around me and follow the instructions found in Colossians 4:5, 6 “Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”