



MARTIN LUTHER COLLEGE

# knightwatch

WEEKLY



MARCH 27, 2026

## From MLC to the World: Study Abroad



Senior **Katie Gilkey** (*LPS /The Springs-Sparks NV*) spent last semester far from our campus—at the University of Limerick in Ireland. (That’s *Ollscoil Luimnigh* in Gaelic, she says!) An early childhood education major, Katie studied Communications, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), and several Irish-specific courses in traditional music, dance, and performance.

“Ireland is stunning,” she says, “and the people who live there are incredibly kind and welcoming. I care deeply about the people around me, and I value cultures, cultural customs, and the perspectives that come from culture.”

**Learning Resilience:** One key takeaway for Katie was learning resilience. “Just like anywhere in the world, there are hardships and challenges. I saw firsthand how people muster up courage to face each new day with a tenacity that can override any storm of life. I was also able to practice my resilience and perseverance on many occasions, but I believe the struggles we face are the very things that shape our character, who we are, and how we’ll overcome future adversity.”

**Practicing Compassion:** One semester highlight synced resilience with Katie’s deep compassion for others: her work with Ukrainian refugees living in Ireland.

The trauma of the Russian invasion of their country, along with the pressure of learning a new language and providing for their families in a new country, weighed heavily on the refugees. After trainings in trauma and the refugee experience, Katie created a lesson to help the refugees express difficult emotions through movement—specifically, the Cha Cha Slide! “One of my greatest passions in life is using movement as a means to help people heal and cope with trauma,” she says. “This was an unbelievable experience because I was able to build real relationships with real people who have suffered greatly.”

**Preparing for Success:** Katie says she was fully prepared to succeed in Ireland by her coursework with MLC’s Cultural Engagement Director Megan Kassuelke. The “Pre-Departure” course prepped her to walk into a new culture and face uneasy situations. The “In Country” course provided support while she was there, and the “Re-Entry” course helped her process and apply what she’s learned. “It’s like a mini therapy cohort where we reflect on our experiences and how we’ve changed.”

**Growing Spiritually:** Katie is especially grateful for the spiritual growth she experienced while there. “Studying abroad allows you to grow in your faith life in a whole new way. You typically don’t have access to church services and people who believe what you believe. This requires you to focus on personal devotional time with God and to be intentional about finding ways to grow spiritually—as well as jump out of your comfort zone to share Jesus with others.”

**Starting at MLC:** Martin Luther College is the launching pad for a deeply meaningful study-abroad experience like this—and for deep Spirit-inspired spiritual growth too. “If you want to plant yourself in an environment where you can be fed by God’s Word in numerous ways and have opportunities to serve God and his people, then MLC may be just the place for you!” Katie says. “Pray about it, let the Lord guide you, and trust God’s plan for your life. He will work through you, no matter where you are in the world!”



STUDY ABROAD  
THROUGH MLC