



Over the course of the past year my life has endured many changes. When I moved to Central Ohio I knew I would face many challenges but one experience I was most excited about was the opportunity to navigate a new fellowship. The task proved to be arduous and one of my greatest challenges. As I traveled from church to church questions like, "where do I belong?", "what do I believe?" and "what do I have to offer?" began to surface. For the first time in my life I would be joining a church with my own volition.

Second Chance has reignited my desire to continuously grow spiritually in a deeper and more meaningful way. Here I am able to reflect on prior church experiences and provide input on what is needed to assist with my ever growing relationship with God. By God's grace and mercy every day we have the opportunity to start anew and with Second Chance that same opportunity exists.

-Kya Hatton



The opportunity to serve at the free store in Magnetic Springs was life changing. Never before had I served or volunteered in a setting where people had so little and gave so much. I had been very prejudiced toward Medicaid recipients in the past, or folks without jobs, etc. the poor or homeless. I couldn't wrap my head around why this happens, never truly understanding that their needs are not only financial but spiritual and emotional. I witnessed miracle after miracle at the free store. The poor helping the poor. One elderly lady sticks out in my mind, she shopped for her neighbors as well as herself. She would visit with folks and if they mentioned they had a particular need she would try to fill that need without it creating a hardship on her. I also witnessed folks who were hungry for conversation, laughter and a sense of purpose even if it meant being cold. You see the free store in the winter can get quite nippy. But that cold air never stopped folks from shopping or helping load and unload, fold and refold. I personally watched a young boy fill his pocket with a muffin when he could easily have filled his pocket with the cash in the donation box. He was truly hungry. My own needs were met when I realized how much more I was worth just by helping. I became a better person every time I helped with food or gave or received a hug. The free store provides a lot more than clothes or

household goods. It provides hope, it restores your faith in God and mankind. It helps folks share not in how much they have but what they feel someone else may need. I look at those less fortunate than myself with a much better understanding than I ever had before. I now search my soul as to how I can help rather than criticize their situation. I just wanted to say thanks for opening my eyes to what God calls us to do as neighbors, as friends but mostly as Christians. I have been involved in church most of my life but it took the free store to make me truly feel like a servant of The Lord.

- Sherry Kepling



I joined Fringe: A Community Growing last year as an individual looking for something different, something deeper, and something innovative. Something that is really important that Fringe promotes and provides to me is knowledge about modern issues and situations. As a community of imperfect individuals, we are constantly learning and using information to make decisions about how to live every day. A great example of the promotion of relevant and accurate information I experienced through Fringe was listening to a speaker brought in to talk about sex trafficking. This person had worked with this modern issue for many years and had written a book about her experiences. She was very knowledgeable about the information being presented and was able to convey why this issue should be important to me. In terms of service, Fringe has been a great way for me to reach out to the hurting world surrounding me. I believe the best example of this is our knitting project. Fringe brings people together for a time of knitting scarves and discussion during the week and gives the scarves to people in need during the colder months. This has been a great ministry for me because it not only helps our less fortunate brothers and sisters I would have never come into contact with, but provides me with a community that nourishes my heart and fulfills the needs of others at the same time. Nourishing, challenging, and learning about ourselves is a big part of Fringe. In the winter, I attended a retreat at Camp Christian devoted to prayer and what that looks like. We explored several methods for praying which helped me discover in myself what felt comfortable, right, and helpful in terms of navigating my relationship with God.

-Bailey Davis

MISION CRISTIANA EL FARO DISCIPULOS DE CRISTO

I am deeply appreciative of Pastor Crucita's efforts in her ministry and personal attention to her group. She gives of herself more than 100%. Her attention to the spiritual as well as the basic needs are evident when I listen to some of congregant's expression of their experiences. Those most affected are the new in town. As a shepherd, she was quick in responding and recruiting women to pray with her during a crisis of a new young visiting mother, in the young mother's home.

-Magda Soto-Rivera

El Faro – Discípulos de Cristo, es un lugar donde nuestras familias visitan, el Santo Templo Cristiano, donde sentimos el Espíritu de Dios. Somos hermanos en Cristo y nos amamos unos a otros. De mi persona, me gusta el Faro porque Dios me ha dado el regalo de cantar alabanzas para Jesús y adorarlo y le doy gracias a mi Dios por el don que me regaló. El Faro es la iglesia que estaba buscando.”

El Faro - Disciples of Christ, is a place where our families visit the Holy Christian Temple, where we experience the Spirit of God. We are brothers in Christ and love one another. As for me; I like El Faro because God gave me the gift of singing praises to Jesus and worship and to give thanks to my God for the gift God gave me. El Faro is the church I was looking for. "

-Luis Marin Cruz

DISCIPLE GATHERING

Being part of the Disciples Gathering community has been a blessing in my life. Being able to discuss ideas and topics with fellow young adults has strengthened my faith by opening me up to new political movements, as well as my faith in God through outreach projects and group building. Our world is larger than the physical location we are in. We are able to discuss a wide variety of topics in a loving, respectful way. Additionally, being able to share with our home community of Westerville through service projects, we can bring that love of Christ to others outside of ourselves.

-Sandy Nagy

I grew up in a traditional church, full of wonderful people who took the “it takes a village” mentality seriously, particularly with providing a strong Christian foundation. Coming to Disciples Gathering, a radical new church start, has only allowed me to grow and build onto that foundation I started with. Because of the intimate setting, we’re able to hold in-depth discussions on the history of the church as well as pose philosophical questions I didn’t even know were up for debate within the church. We don’t shy away from uncomfortable topics that some might fear will shake faith but has only served to strengthen mine.

I’ve learned that faith is not a static thing, but something that continues to grow as you learn about the different aspects that brought Christianity to us the way it is today. That has made me consider what our contribution to our faith today will mean for those in the future and that each action counts. Disciples Gathering opened a new door for me in my faith journey, a door that I hope everyone can find in their lives.

-Kacie Graham