

Our new church pastors were invited to ask someone on their project to talk about what it's been like to work on launching a new church alongside of them. Each person has a unique story. Read on to discover the great things God is doing in our new church program.

Searching for Something New

I have been a church hopper and searching for a home for well over a year. I have not felt like a traditional church was hitting on everything I craved... Communion and Conversation. I came across Disciples Gathering on a Friday night in Westerville. They had a booth in our town's "fourth Friday" where they discussed marriage equality. I talked to Brian Saxe about what it was they stood for. I felt God tell me to check them out. So I got some information and that Thursday I went to a "pub talk" for a discussion. I can't really tell you how it felt to have an intelligent conversation about Jesus and not feel like if I were to have a different view I would be trampled. I started going to Disciples Gathering every time they met. I love their willingness to listen and understand, something that churches I had been to and even grown up in severely lack.

In the process of becoming aware of the LGBTQ community's struggles with equality I found a place with Disciples Gathering that I could truly be honest about who I was. With Debbie's help and complete acceptance I have realized and vocalized that I am bisexual. The first time I was able to say it was when Debbie and I went to a press conference for equality of LGBTQ in every aspect of their lives. I have found acceptance with something I always pushed away because of the lack of understanding and feeling like I was sinful because of my natural tendencies. I feel more honest with myself and with God because of the ability to be open about this major part of my identity. I am eternally grateful for Disciples Gathering and the freedom they bring to this aspect of my life. The respect they have shown me has been life changing. They have showed me how God is LOVE and isn't here to condemn me for being the person he made me. I have also been equipped to discuss what the Bible says about alternative lifestyles and because of that I feel confident in my positions. Disciples Gathering has been a huge blessing in my life from simple discussions to life altering realizations this is a place that is not traditional and perfect for what I need at this point in my life!—

- Anonymous

Rev. Debbie and Min. Brian Saxe are co-pastors of Disciples Gathering

Finding a New Church

Navigating my journey through college has been challenging, exciting, and sometimes disappointing. When I first began participating in Fringe Community, I was very discouraged about my college experiences to that point. I yearned for a sense of community. I quickly discovered that Fringe could provide me with support, and fill me spiritually. My previous perceptions of what it meant to worship and experience the Holy Spirit were challenged. I remember feeling a powerful and pleasant sense of discomfort the first time we sat in an open, public space talking about God and praying. I was accustomed to worshiping in the comfort of my church in which everyone around me was gathered for the same reason. Sitting outside on a big, green blanket with countless strangers walking by somehow began to feel comfortable. I felt wonderfully vulnerable in this new experience. My fear of judgmental gazes from bystanders vanished. I felt the freedom to experience God's presence in a new place, which encouraged me to look for God everywhere.

Experiences such as that have created a sense of freedom and fearlessness in my spirituality through my participation in Fringe. When I attend Fringe gatherings I do not feel restricted in the questions I can ask or the topics I want to discuss. There is a strong mutual respect present for everyone gathered. We uncover ways to relate God and our spirituality to health, love, education, sexuality, music, food, art, human rights, travel, emotions, tradition, and countless other subjects. We discuss the past, present, and future of the world, and how we might spread love in our responses as Christians. Fringe encourages thoughts and discussion that reflect communal growth through a spiritual lens that reflects justice, peace, solidarity, and love.

Fringe also inspires personal discernment and development through creativity and curiosity. We sometimes resort back to our childhood and allow God to speak to us through our words and doodles as we "pray in color". There is opportunity for each individual to facilitate and lead discussion. We challenge ourselves to meditate in a bustling coffee shop, finding God even in seemingly unlikely places. We also knit. A lot. Fringe seeks ways in which we can utilize our individual and collective gifts to serve each other and our community.

As I attempt to balance my active and often confusing life as a college student, I continually notice personal gratitude for the presence of Fringe Community in my life. Fringe provides a source of energy, escape, freedom, support, challenge, and acceptance. I am thankful that Fringe continually encourages me to seek God in ways I have not before and to share those experiences with a loving community.

-Anonymous

Rev. Seth Stout and Rev. Ellen Huffman are co-pastors of Fringe

Bridging a little bit of Hope and Love via the backdrop of Theater Fellowship

Theater Fellowship is a program created by El Faro for a non-traditional setting designed around dramatic, social, emotion filled skits that communicate hope, love and understanding to the underprivileged in our community. The programs goals for our church and members are to collectively build spirit filled relationships through the performing arts while bridging a little bit of hope and Love with gifts that God provides us. Through the power of ‘Theater Fellowship’ we form empowering, spirit filled bonds that can make a difference in the lives of the underprivileged— spirit filled bonds that can help people struggling in life, reclaim their futures.

According to David in the book of psalms, it is proven that a person, who lies in a muddy pit, can be lifted onto a solid foundation through the power of being born again. The power of El Faro’s ‘Theater Fellowship’ embodies being born again because it utilizes the performing arts and a team of people from our church equipped with the Lords gifts promised to us—gifts that they will share with those who struggle daily in life-- gifts that come from the fruit of the spirit as Paul explains in Galatians which produce fruit in a person’s life such as Love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control--fruit which can be harvested and used to lift a person out of a muddy abyss onto a solid, fruitful foundation.

On February 14th 2015 El Faro ministries will put into action its first ‘Fellowship Theater’ performance titled ‘Emotions Speak’. The productions cast is an eclectic group who struggle in live daily; however they are being lead and molded by people who lead lives in the spirit and who are equipped with Gods gifts which instill strength, commitment, faith, hope and most important love—gifts that via the backdrop of El Faro’s ‘Theater Fellowship’ will be shared to help bridge struggling souls to a little bit of hope and love.

-Ed

Rev. Cruicita Marrero is pastor of Misión Cristiana El Faro Discipulos de Cristo

Launching a New Church

Last year, my pastor asked me to consider serving on the team of a group that was working to launch a new church, a non-traditional congregation in the Worthington/Dublin/North Columbus area. They were reaching out to the “unchurched”—young adults for whom the normal Sunday morning worship didn’t set them on fire. It took awhile, not knowing what I could possibly contribute, but I decided I should let God use me however God needed.

At some point, we all wander down the wrong path, make mistakes and get off track, but everyone deserves a Second Chance. Second Chance Christian Church will give people a second chance at life and the abundance God has promised to each person regardless of race, class, education, mistakes or beliefs.

Plans started fleshing out. We sponsored a Halloween party for kids in the fall as well as a project to provide backpacks with meals for youth who are eligible for subsidized lunches to have healthy meals over Thanksgiving break. Along the way, plans continued toward a community health fair called Healthy Habits to be held this spring. All the while we were making plans to find a space, musicians and equipment necessary for the first worship service. On Tuesdays in April, we plan to begin a Bible Study to build the community that will become Second Chance Christian Church. Again this summer we will be offering a summer workout program/track club to promote healthy lifestyles for young people of diverse backgrounds.

Being a part of all these plans is exciting and spiritually enlightening. I may not fit the demographics Second Chance seeks to reach, but then again, maybe I do. It’s amazing being part of the planning and seeing it come together. There is lots more planning to do and exciting prospects for the future under the leadership of Pastor Trayce Stewart. If you have a few hours each month to surrender to God’s second chances, contact the regional office.

-Gerri Miller

Rev. Trayce Stewart is Pastor of Second Chance Christian Church