

Off Court Street



Fall 2019

the newsletter of **united campus
ministry**
at ohio university

The mission of UCM is to engage the Ohio University and Athens communities in spiritual growth,

work for social justice, and community service guided by socially progressive and interfaith values.

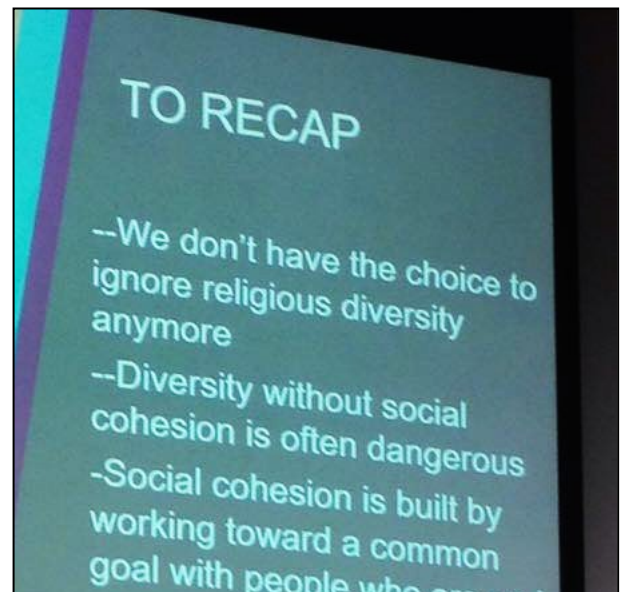
GROWING TOGETHER ~ REV. EVAN YOUNG

UCM is and has long been a ministry focused on social justice. At times—particularly times like these—that identity can feel political. It definitely gives rise to and supports a lot of work in the political arena. Advocating for full inclusion and equality of LGBTQ+ folk, working to undermine and dismantle systemic racism and white supremacy culture, offering and promoting compassionate treatment of immigrants and asylum-seekers, and teaching and practicing environmentally and economically just behavior have in the popular media been cast as conventionally liberal or politically correct positions.

To us, though, these are not political principles. The actions we base on them are not intended to advocate for any political party or holder of (or aspirant to) political office. Likewise, the critiques we offer of policies, programs, and positions are not motivated by political interests.

The questions with which we concern ourselves are much larger, and deeper. They are at their core theological questions—questions about our relationship with and duty to one another, and to the all-encompassing whole of which we are a part and on which we depend. In Christian systematic theology, they are concerned with the Doctrine of God, the Doctrine of Christ, soteriology (salvation), eschatology (the ultimate resolution of creation, or end times), and theological anthropology (the nature of humanity). In our interfaith context, they are concerned with the universal existential questions “why are we here,” “what are we supposed to do,” and “why do we suffer?”

That’s why it’s hard, in the current context, to do ministry that is separate and distinct from political work. If we truly believe that we have a moral obligation to serve and advocate for the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the foreigner, how are we to respond to and interact with a government that consistently enacts policies that harm



SAVE THE DATE!

November 15, 2019

Come to UCM's

Annual Fall

Fundraiser

5:30-8:00 pm at ARTS/

West

132 W. State Street

precisely these populations? If we believe in the interconnectedness and interdependence of all life and the sanctity of the world of resources on which life depends, how are we to engage with systems and structures that seem bent on exploitation that is irreversibly damaging that interdependent whole?

At UCM we don't know the answers to these questions. But we do know, and teach, that the questions are important enough to change hearts, behavior, and lives.

FROM THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ~ LACEY ROGERS

This summer I had the pleasure of once again being part of providing a safe, supportive and communal space for LGBTQ+ teens through the PRISM Summer Youth Cooking Program. As the Assistant Director of United Campus Ministry and someone dedicated to activism for LGBTQ+ individuals, continuing to serve as one of the organizers of the PRISM program is one of those gratifying opportunities to see something you care about transform and make a difference in your community. For our first meeting this summer we had 16 energetic, enthusiastic and passionate teens joining us in the kitchen to learn how to make a rainbow of appetizers to snack on while getting to know one another, and then make tie-dye t-shirts to march as a group in the second Athens Pride march as the PRISM Program. PRISM also had its first ever art show at ARTS/WEST, where PRISM attendees were encouraged to bring in their individual art or art projects they made at PRISM to showcase in a gallery. This was for many the first time they were able to publicly display their art, as well as to make money from it (all proceeds for art sales went directly to the artists), all with the overwhelming support of the Athens community.

Recently I attended a conference on youth suicide prevention at the Natural Freedom Wellness Center, not only as a counselor interested in gaining more information about the topic, but also to represent PRISM as an organization. Many of the attendees—an assortment of counselors, social workers, teachers, school administration, etc.—eagerly learned about the program for the first time, thanking the organizers for providing this much needed resource, which they confirmed to their knowledge did not exist elsewhere in the area. Others were aware of the program and knew people who attended and appreciated what we were doing and grabbed another flyer, because they thought there was probably someone else they knew who could use it or it would be good to have some additional visibility. As the stats continued to pour out about risk factors for teen suicide, including LGBTQ+ identity, and particularly in the case of those who identified as members of the LGBTQ+ community with or without supportive figures in their lives, it continued to solidify for me why this work is so much more than teaching youth to cook every Monday this summer. I am proud to be one of the organizers of a program that recognizes this important need to create safe spaces and provide outlets to explore and navigate the difficulties of adolescence and specifically LGBTQ+ adolescence. Figuring out who you are can be a whirlwind experience for anyone, but with the support of peers, adults, and the community, I know that we are helping to make this experience feel a little less so.

*The PRISM LGBTQ Youth Art Program meets on Mondays from 3:00p.m.-5:30p.m. at ARTS/WEST during the academic school year (follows Athens City Schools schedule), and the PRISM Summer Youth Cooking Program meets on Mondays from 3:00p.m.-5:30p.m. at United Campus Ministry during the summer. For more information about the organization check us out at on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/prismqart/>



L-R: Intern Bee Irwin, Board member Loran Marsan, Assistant Director Lacey Rogers, and intern Mykal Deramus on the Appalachia Rising Service Immersion spring break experience at SuBAMUH in March. The trip was co-sponsored by UCM and the Ohio University Campus Involvement Center.

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our number is 1-844-441-1111

MONEY MATTERS ~ REV. EVAN YOUNG

As most of you know, UCM is not part of Ohio University. We are not an item in the university's budget, and apart from student organization money we occasionally apply for to defray some of the costs of our meal programs, we receive no funding from OU.

We're grateful for the financial support we receive from church sources, both from local congregations and from denominational offices. But that support only goes so far—and not as far as it used to. While in decades past we enjoyed support from as many as six different denominations, it's been more than fifteen years since we received substantial support from any denomination other than the last two standing: the East Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church, and the Presbytery of the Scioto Valley, PC-USA.

Most of you also know that UCM has for decades been a staunch ally of and advocate for LGBTQ+ folks on campus and in the wider community—a commitment that continues with our support of the Prism LGBTQ+ Youth Art Program you read about elsewhere in this issue. And you may know that this past spring, the United Methodist Church held a highly conflictual General Conference at which delegates affirmed a position much less supportive and inclusive of that population than we would have liked to see. One of the results of that conference is likely to be reduced revenue coming to denominational offices through apportionments paid by churches; and one result of that is that for 2020 we expect an \$8,000 reduction in our support from the East Ohio Conference.



UCM's 2019-20 staff and interns: (front, L-R) Assistant Director Lacey Rogers, Hay Spurgeon, and Bee Irwin; (rear, L-R) Kasydi Dunaway, Tiffany Anderson, Sarah Daniels, Executive Director Evan Young, and Michael D...

This is neither new nor surprising—Wesley Student Centers (the United Methodist campus ministry brand)

throughout the country are being told to move toward self-sufficiency. But it is challenging. We're taking steps to meet that challenge by reaching out to more and more people who might become UCM donors if they knew more about what we do. Over the next few months, we'll also be reaching out to current and past donors to talk about what we—and you—envision for our future. And we're asking you, who know and support our work, to consider deepening your own commitment, to ensure that our ministry continues to transform the Ohio University community and the lives of future generations of students!

UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRY IS A 501(C)3 NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION. WE NEED YOUR DONATIONS TO SUPPORT OUR MISSION TO ENGAGE THE OHIO UNIVERSITY AND ATHENS COMMUNITIES IN SPIRITUAL GROWTH, WORK FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE GUIDED BY SOCIALLY PROGRESSIVE AND INTERFAITH VALUES. PLEASE CONSIDER SENDING A CHECK TODAY TO 18 N. COLLEGE ST. OR DONATE THROUGH OUR SECURE PAYPAL ACCOUNT BY CLICKING THE DONATE BUTTON ON OUR WEBSITE. THANK YOU!!

THANK YOU!

As always, we could not do what we do without the generous and ongoing support of our Sustainer Circle, donors, and others who give to UCM...

Special thanks to Rev. Dr. Dorsey Blake, Fulbright Pre-Academic Orientation, Delta Gamma Sorority, OU Office of Global Opportunities, Kleinpenny Educational Fund, The Elizabeth McGeachin McKee Foundation, and Casa Nueva.

THANKS TO THOSE WHO SUPPORT OUR FREE MEAL PROGRAMS:

Athens Civitan Club for home-cooked dishes and volunteers on fifth Thursdays; Avalanche Pizza for pizza on first Thursdays; Donations of food: Athens Food Rescue, CFI Donation Station, OU LGBT Center; Volunteer organizations including: First Presbyterian Church, Fulbright Scholars, GIVE at OU, Ohio Women in Business, Mohamed Amira service group, Alternate Spring Break participants, the Bowman family, Nepalese Student Association, Fashion Associates, Sigma Chi, OSU Medical Students, Ultimate Frisbee group, Pepsi Scholars, and Delta Gamma.

THANKS TO THOSE WHO HAVE MADE INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN 2019:

Carolyn Allen, Carol Beale, Mary Jane Black, Dorsey Blake, Jennifaye Brown, John L. Butler, Janet Carleton, Anthony Chila, Janey Copeland, John Corlett, Mary Costello, Margaux Cowden, Shea Daniels, David Descutner & Lysa Burnier, Emilie Falc, Lynn Graham-Mowery, Jan Griesinger, Jenny Hall-Jones, Warren Haydon, Theo J. Hutchinson, Rachel Hyden, Ralph & Janet Izard, Katherine Jellison, Sarah Jenkins, Jan Keenan, Jeff Kelby, Jennifer Kelly, Amy King & John Gilliom, Jim & Marilyn Kunstel, Lorraine Myers, Liz Ohle, Debbie Phillips, Nancy Pierce, Mary Lee Powell, Chris & Angie Pyle, Andrea Reany, Marcia Ruhling, Jerry Schaffer, Wenda Sheard, Shannon Stewart, Janalee Stock, Elizabeth Story, Andrew Stuart & Harvey Ballard, Melissa Wales & Greg Kessler, Thomas & Anne Walker, George Weckman, William Wemer & Steven Belet, Susan Westenbarger, Lois & Robert Whealey, Keith Wiens & Becky Pankratz, and Nan Worthing.

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