Student Spotlight

Throughout the year, we will be regularly celebrating and sharing with you the stories and journeys of our college students; a glimpse inside their lives and how being part of the UCC family has impacted them during this time. We’d like to start by introducing three students who are graduating in 2020.

James Flowers, Senior TCU
Degree: BS in Sports Broadcasting, Double Minor in Journalism and History

What will you miss most about TCU?
I’ll certainly miss the routine of school in general. But as far as TCU is concerned, I’ll just miss being on campus. I’ve been lucky enough to live on campus for four years and I enjoy going to events on campus or eating in the dining hall or even just walking to class and seeing someone I know. It’s the close-knit community that makes a place like TCU so unique.

How did you get involved at UCC?
My involvement in UCC started by joining worship one morning early on in my first semester at TCU. UCC was the second church I visited and I didn’t waste any more time going to see other churches because I really enjoyed what I saw at UCC. Paul and Becky Hartman were the first couple I met at UCC and they made me feel very welcome, as did the rest of the congregation, so I knew I wanted to make UCC my church home away from home. One Sunday morning during my sophomore year, I was asked to usher because they just needed bodies. From there, it led to me ushering every Sunday. That involvement is less about me collecting the offering or serving communion, but more about getting to know people in the church and sharing my love for Christ with them.

If you could have dinner with anyone, dead or alive, who would you ask and why?
If I could have dinner with anyone dead or alive, it would be Junior Johnson. I know it’s not the most common or conventional answer, but the Silver Fox got his start in NASCAR after running moonshine in the backwoods of North Carolina. I have a lot of interest in the history of NASCAR and Junior Johnson was one of those guys who got the sport off the ground. I’d want to know all about his experiences running moonshine and the early days of the sport.

How has being part of the UCC family affected you?
Being a part of the UCC family has been incredibly important. Over my four years across the street, I’ve grown so much mentally and spiritually and UCC certainly has played a role in that. Being a part of the UCC family is more than just showing up on Sunday mornings. Although that’s a big part of it, being a member of the family is about being there for others and growing within the church and with the church and I feel like I have certainly done that. UCC has been there for me as much, if not more so, as I have been there for them.

Emily Emerson, Senior TCU
Degree: Early Childhood Education (EC-6)

What’s Next?
I plan to attend graduate school at TCU for Curriculum and Instruction, with an emphasis in Mathematics Education.

How did you get involved at UCC?
I grew up in the Disciples of Christ church, and knew that UCC was right on campus! My first Sunday in college, I walked over to church for the 9:00am service. I’ve been going here ever since (except now I am a BIG fan of the later 11 o’clock service)!

If you could only pick one meal to eat for a year, what would you choose?
Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, and green beans.
Where have you experienced the Divine in the past year?
I have experienced God’s wonderful blessings in my student teaching this semester. I was placed out in Aledo ISD, far from my friends here in Fort Worth. I had no clue what I was getting myself into, but found that He knew exactly what I needed for a fulfilling student teaching experience. I have learned so much, and feel confident in my calling to become an educator!

What is your favorite Bible verse or story?
My favorite bible verse is 1 Chronicles 16:11; “Look to the Lord and His strength; seek His face always!” Consistently looking to God has been a struggle, especially throughout college when faced with many of life’s challenges. However, this verse serves as a good reminder of His goodness and great plans He has for my future.

What would you want the congregation to know about your time at TCU or at the church?
I am grateful for the love that the church shows to all. UCC helps keep the meaning of the “C” in TCU “Christian.”

Naiomi Gonzalez, Graduate Student TCU
Degree: Masters in History

What’s Next?
No idea. You would think that with this being my third graduate degree I would know by now. I do want to note that I have been attending Rev. Peterman’s book study on Parker J. Palmer’s, "Let Your Life Speak." Rev. Peterman promised I would have an idea about my vocation by the end of the study or my money back!

How did you get involved at UCC?
I started attending off and on a few years ago when I was at Brite Divinity School. I was looking for a church that met the following criteria: close enough to walk to and progressive. UCC fits both. Once I returned to TCU last year, it was not a difficult decision to plug back into UCC.

What book would you recommend people read over the summer?
I don’t have one book per se, but I do have a few authors/theologians that people should check out: James Cone, Rachel Held Evans and Monica Coleman.

How has being part of the UCC family affected you?
This past year has been extremely difficult. The plans I had made regarding my degree program fell apart and in a matter of weeks I had to make difficult decisions about my future. Even now, I still struggle with everything that happened this past year. But UCC has been a welcoming and comforting presence. People at UCC have been incredibly encouraging. They have taken time to check up on me and let me know that while things may be difficult now, that things can improve.

What have you participated in at UCC and what were/are some of your favorite memories?
I’ve been involved in the Sunday School class Koinonia and have loved my time there! The members there have been fantastic. I’ll miss them when I graduate.

Where have you experienced the Divine in the past year?
In the kindness and words of encouragement of members at UCC! I really do want to emphasize how much I appreciate the kindness and love that I have been shown. Thank you.