

WINTHROP EPISCOPAL LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY

LEARNING ABOUT RACE RELATIONS

Elizabeth Coté, WELCM Senior

Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "I look to a day when people will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." Whiteness is considered normal in the US. Whiteness is what I grew up on--I did not learn about the positive aspects of other races. I did not learn about important African Americans, their contributions to literature, history, or science. But I have found I love learning about their culture. I believe it is powerful when people can come together. Service is one thing everyone can participate in and we can learn about the people we serve. This past spring, I had three experiences that opened my eyes to race relations.

First, over New Year's 2019, WELCM sent my sister and me to Memphis for the Lutheran Student Movement Retreat focused on social justice. The theme was "Everyone is Welcome at the Table." I loved Memphis and the deep African American history and culture planted there. My favorite part was the Civil Rights Museum: I was shocked at how little I knew about the nonviolent demonstrations led by MLK. What history I learned growing up was based on whiteness. I help a middle schooler with homework and I have even noticed that all the people she studies in history and science are white. Visiting Memphis, I was inspired by MLK, his strength and vision.

Next, I participated in Winthrop's MLK Day of Service. I was the only white person in a group of African Americans. I knew this shouldn't matter, but I felt uncomfortable. I recalled what a teacher told me about how it feels to be the only African American in the room. I realized I could not imagine having this feeling every day. Not only were there all black people around me, we were listening to black music, which also was out of my comfort zone. As the day progressed, however, I really enjoyed getting to know my group. I found they were not so different from me; I was able to be myself and they accepted me for who I am. I am so glad I went!

In spring semester, I also took a Race and Ethnicity class. Now, I am working on applying what I learned by reading books about different people, and working at a majority-black school. I hope to become a minister to children, youth, and families, and do outreach and race reconciliation work, because I believe God calls us to show love to everyone. I want to help get different races involved in the Lutheran Church. I have also experienced working with Christ Mission, an African American Lutheran Church in Columbia. I felt welcomed in this worshipping community, and sad that our churches are still so segregated.

If any of these issues bothers you as well, why not make a change and take a stand?
"What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."- Micah 6:8

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GRIFFIN ROHRER

Since graduating, Griffin has been taking time to travel and work while figuring out her next steps. This past summer, she road-tripped around the US, and has recently been promoted to manager in a restaurant. She plans to stay in the restaurant business while she goes back to school to continue her education.



JULIA SWIDZINSKI

Julia was accepted into the AmeriCorps program in San Francisco called Healthy Choices. The overall goal of the program is to improve student success by increasing attendance and pro-social behavior. It's a year-long program where Julia works with two schools in the San Francisco School District, organizing mentoring programs, leading groups like a GSA and a mindfulness club, and providing support in classrooms and after-school programs.



TAYLOR GIBBY

After graduation, Taylor moved to Piedmont, SC and accepted a job as a part time Youth Director at Grace Episcopal Church in Anderson, SC. She also works as a waitress in the evenings at Saluda River Grill. Taylor has made several new friends and is discerning where she is being called in life.



MISSION TO ECUADOR

Ellery McNeil, WELCM Sophomore

This summer, I was given the opportunity to travel to Ecuador with The Episcopal Church of Our Saviour, where I attend during the school year. I had previously traveled to Ecuador in summer 2018 with my home church, St. James, Greenville. From that first visit, I was enamored with Ecuador's vibrant history and culture. When I arrived in Rock Hill my freshman year, I was excited to learn that Our Savior was also planning a mission experience to Ecuador. I attended the informational meeting with no plans to go on the trip—I just thought I could encourage those who were interested and answer their questions. At the meeting, however, I felt a pull to join the Our Saviour team going to Ecuador. I am more than pleased that I went. Traveling to Ecuador this summer was really an amazing experience. Putting that into words would be near impossible, but when I was there, it just felt right.



Basilica of the National Vow, Quito

Our team helped with construction work and painting, and various other things such as leading church worship, and workshops for families. We were there for about ten days. I also had the opportunity to meet Cameron Vivanco, the diocesan missionary who serves in Ecuador as the co-founder and educational director for Education Equals Hope. Through our discussion, and hours spent reflecting, I have decided to apply to intern with Education Equals Hope next summer. If selected, I will be helping teams similar to the ones I have been on myself, as they navigate their time and travels through Ecuador. I am grateful for the opportunities my Ecuador experience afforded me and I look forward to serving and sharing Christ in the future.



Our Peer Ministers, Samantha (left) & Josie (right).



New and old faces at our first Tuesday night Gathering of the year



Doughnuts and apple-picking at Windy Hill Orchard, York, SC



Looking sharp for a dinner out during our planning retreat in Isle of Palms!



Josie and Ellery barely survived the heat while tabling at convocation!

KANUGA SUMMER

Grace Tristan, WELCM sophomore

Kanuga is an Episcopal center in Hendersonville, NC, that includes a Conference & Retreat Center, Camp Kanuga, and the Bob Campbell Youth Campus. I have been going to “Camp Bob” for as long as I can remember--in fact, I celebrated my tenth year at Kanuga this past summer--and I recently made the switch from camper to counselor, while WELCM friends Elizabeth Cote and Crystal Moore served at Camp Kanuga.

Through time on Kanuga grounds, it is clear that God is at work. The outdoor spaces truly act as a sanctuary for the soul and I had a great sense of fulfillment working with children. It is so touching to be a part of a child’s life and to help them grow as an individual. Helping shape a child’s character was the most humbling thing I could ever do. Through fun camp activities I led, the children learned skills including teamwork, confidence, and conflict resolution that they could take home and apply to their daily lives. In the time I spent working with them, helping them to become the best versions of themselves, my cabin full of young girls made a huge impact on my life.

Camp Bob at Kanuga holds memories that will always be special to me as a camper--it feels just as meaningful now that I hold responsibility for making sure other kids have a similarly powerful experience, encountering God by exploring nature and connecting with one another!



Grace Tristan on the zipline!



Crystal Moore (r) hugging Kanuga friends

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