

## **Spring Report on Campus Communion at The College of Charleston**

*The Rev. Taylor Daniel, Campus Minister*

Fittingly for a springtime update, Campus Communion is in a season of new growth and change. After nearly 3 years on campus, we're now seeing our first real transition and turnover period, as some of our founding students are sent off into the wider world (over the last two Spring and their intervening Fall semesters we have graduated 15 seniors) and we see a new group of student leaders rise up to take their turn. As some of our older blooms are fading from view, we're thanking God for new green shoots. And this transitory dynamic is impacting what we're up to, both vertically and horizontally.

### **The Vertical (Going Deeper):**

There is no better time than spring semester for going deeper in college ministry. The all consuming need for outreach to and integration of new students which consumes the Fall semester gives way to a season of discipleship.

Our semester bible study series in the Old Testament's wisdom books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and Psalms gave us the chance to talk through cultivating wisdom in our lives. (And all will, I'm sure, be greatly heartened to know that 90% of our Bible study attendees rated themselves as "very wise". A self-assessment sure to age like fine wine.)

Additionally, six students agreed to join our leadership team as new members. As we continue to meet through the summer months (every other week) for formation and to plan and jointly execute our kickoff in the Fall, these young people are taking ownership of the ministry's outreach. It is also giving promising future church leaders their first crack at helping run bible studies and small groups, plan retreats, and steer a ministry vision.

### **The Horizontal (Stretching Wider):**

Of course, in the Christian life, we are never poured into just so we can keep all the goodness to ourselves; we're blessed to be a blessing!

For the students, this means a growing focus on getting things in place for a strong push to evangelize and invite new students to join us this summer and fall. That's the end point our student leaders and I are prepping for so that, by God's grace, people whose names we don't yet know can come to know His. This also means some reviews of our existing small groups and social events to see what does and doesn't work, and how we can tweak them.

**It has also led us to begin searching for a new staff member.**

Last December our board held our first annual "An Evening with Campus Communion" fundraiser. We shared Campus Communion's vision for gospel-centered and distinctively Anglican community at CofC, as well as some of the fruit we are currently experiencing. We also asked our partners to invest further so that we could add a female staff member to better equip us to minister to our 65% female campus.

By God's grace, they delivered in a big way. Our search process began in February.

While our long term goal is a full-time staff hire through the launch of our Campus Communion Internship Program (a two year employment program aimed at more recent college graduates which gives them a chance to "test drive" ministry by working on campus, fundraising their salary, teaching and leading, etc and offers a 90% tuition scholarship to Trinity Anglican Seminary upon completion), our short-term efforts are focused on part-time help.

We have received a number of applications for the position (which is still open if the reader knows anyone who would relish such work!) and have a finalization goal of July 1.

And yet, amidst all the prep and transition, we're still seeing those deeper things that are evergreen. Like the standard collegiate questions.

*"What am I supposed to do with my life after school?"*

*“Where should I go? Where do I fit— professionally/spiritually/relationally?”*

*“Will God ever let me find someone to date/marry so I’m not alone?”*

And the sort of questions that are particular to this cultural moment.

*“Why would an infinite being care who I sleep with?”*

*“Could I ever be truly certain when there’s so many different beliefs in the world?”*

*“Is AI conscious? And is it going to screw me over and take all my job opportunities?”*

As well as the questions underneath those questions.

*“Does God really care about me?”*

*“Can I really open up without getting hurt again?”*

*“Why did he allow me to go through that?”*

We have had conversations around each and every one of those questions this year. Along with many more about tough roommates, familial friction, and worry-inducing bible verses.

This is the reason Campus Communion exists. And why we are so thankful for all your continued giving and prayers to this frontier effort! They are providing resources to meet these questions, and the doubts and fears underneath them, head on with the gospel of grace.

We are thankful for the support of our diocese and the prayers, volunteering, and financial contributions of many individual parishes across the state. If you are already supporting or would like to explore supporting us further (or want to pass this along to someone who may), we simply ask you to pray for us and preach for us.

Pray for our regular students (roughly a third of whom are not Christians)— that they may come to know Christ, whether more deeply or for the first time, as the gentle savior who alone can satisfy.

Pray for our board, as we look to add additional members and seek to broaden and deepen the underlying support for this ministry.

And pray for our search for a female staff person. Pray both that our current part-time needs will soon be satisfied and that our longer term goal of hiring a full-time two year intern can occur this Fall with an eye towards beginning in June of 2027.

Also “preach” for us by signing on for our regular email updates and advertising our ministry to your congregations and any and all you know who have a passion for young people and college ministry on campus.

Grace and Peace,

*The Rev. Taylor Daniel*