



VOICE

A HOME AT THE HEART OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON SINCE 1907 | SPRING 2017

VOLUNTEERS AND DONORS HONORED

Volunteer Churches 2016-2017

- Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church, Cottage Grove
- Christ Presbyterian Church, Madison
- Covenant Presbyterian Church, Madison
- Dale Heights Presbyterian Church, Madison
- First Presbyterian Church, Cambria
- First Presbyterian Church, Waunakee
- Oakland-Cambridge Presbyterian Church, Cambridge
- Sun Valley Presbyterian Church, Beloit
- Union Presbyterian Church, Monroe
- Westminster Presbyterian Church, Madison



On April 30, 2017, students and staff alike honored our treasured volunteers and donors. The special worship service and dinner that day offered a way of showing our deep gratitude for how we are blessed through the service of others all year. Freshman Emily Johnson shared a reflection on how her involvement in the Pres House community has sustained her during her first year away from home. Guests were served a plated dinner by student volunteers as their special way of saying thank you to all the church volunteers who have fed them throughout the school year.

The evening culminated in the Volunteer Award presentation. John Heaton from Christ Presbyterian Church, Madison, won the Distinguished Volunteer award for his long-time dedication and service to the Pres House community. Several times a year, John prepares dinner for our community, often on his own. We are blessed and thankful for John's gracious spirit and delicious meals! ♣

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- Race and Faith



RINGING IN THE LUNAR NEW YEAR

By Michelle Tong

Micro-Community at PH Apartments



On January 27, the “Beyond Local Cuisine” micro-community organized a Lunar New Year Celebration for Pres House Apartments. While enjoying food from Fugu and drinks from Kung Fu Tea, residents made their own red envelopes and learned about how the Chinese ring in the Lunar New Year. This event allowed residents from all backgrounds to participate in celebrations. We also wanted to make sure that residents understood that many Asian countries celebrate the Lunar New Year, even though the term “Chinese New Year” is mistakenly used as an all-encompassing term.

In China, red envelopes (called *hong bao*) are monetary gifts given on special occasions, such as weddings or graduations. Members of the micro-community also discussed ways technology is able to facilitate, not act as a barrier, for this cultural exchange. WeChat, a common messaging system in China, has developed a function that allows customers to send “red envelopes” via mobile payments. Although some may argue that this can only lead to less in-person socialization and reduced family time, we argued that it might actually provide families who do not get to see each other that often with an opportunity to maintain their relationship.

We also discussed the benefits of using the terminology “Lunar New Year” instead of “Chinese New Year.” The former is more encompassing and recognizes that many Asian countries celebrate the holiday, while the latter encourages a cultural chauvinism focused solely on China. To include other countries and cultures, we suggested that residents use the term “Lunar New Year.”

Overall, this was an amazing event that brought Pres House residents together, regardless of whether or not they regularly celebrated the Lunar New Year. We hope that the tradition continues for next year! ✿



PARENT’S PRAISE OF THE NEXT STEP PROGRAM AT PRES HOUSE APARTMENTS

The Next Step program is an apartment community for students in active recovery from addiction. Residents are supervised, mentored, and counseled by Ginger Morgan, Director of Residential Community.

February 15, 2017

Hi Ginger!

I just wanted to thank-you, Pres House and the Next Step program for the services that you are providing to the Madison area. It has been invaluable. Our community is finally coming to grips with the drug and alcohol epidemic facing our state and nation, but I fear we continue to fall short in terms of addressing the needs.

There is no single remedy to the problem, but there is clearly an urgent need for providing counseling services and sober living accommodations at the time that addicts are finally ready to ask for help. These services also need to be affordable for addicts and their support network that have been drained of financial resources.

I am not proud of our son's past, but I am extremely proud of his recovery and his journey to this point. When he was a drug user, it was hard to find any redeeming quality. When sober, he is an incredible human being and hard worker. He has gone from being a dishonest thief and user to being sober for over 20 months and making the Dean's list the last two semesters while earning straight A's. It has been an amazing turn of fortune for an individual who is now dedicated to sobriety. If Next Step and the sober living accommodations had not been available, I am not sure he would be with us today. I am very thankful for that.

Our son is one of the fortunate ones. He could have died during either of his two overdoses. He could have been thrown in prison for the crimes he committed to support his habit. He could have been abandoned by his friends and family. He is cognizant of the fact that he grew up privileged. He grew up knowing the difference between right and wrong in a loving middle class family. That did nothing to buffer him against drug use as a young adult.

As I look at others in our community going through the same struggles, most of them have burned all of their bridges. They don't have a healthy support network. They don't have healthy sober living options. They are not getting the counseling and peer support they need. They are receiving virtually no employment or educational counsel. They are getting virtually no medical assistance for their addiction needs. Worst yet, they don't have the financial means to support these services. In many cases the families of these addicts have already been drained of their financial resources.

The Next Step sober living apartment came at the perfect time for our son. To my knowledge, he has been completely sober since arriving and I think that his academic and employment record would support that. He is a full-time student working two part-time jobs. He is well on his way to paying back his restitution for his crimes to our community and is eager to apply his educational training in a professional setting with someone willing to give him a chance. I want to thank the Next Step program for all you have done for him and wish you the best in your efforts to support others in our community that struggle to pay for these services. These are not costs, but rather investments in programs that work. The alternatives for not providing these services are extremely costly in both human and economic terms.

Thank you!

Parent Name withheld (to preserve anonymity)
Middleton, Wisconsin

BAPTISM AT PRES HOUSE

On Easter Sunday we celebrated Baptism. Yunan Shi was baptized and Zuf Wang reaffirmed his baptism.

Yunan Shi

I have always wanted a simple life in which everything falls into its appropriate place. Rather than having a life that mimics a straight highway, my life looks more like a bumpy country road. I always wanted to have a single place that I can unambiguously call my home. Instead, I have grown up in six different cities in three countries. I was very close to my grandpa, and I dreamed about my grandpa walking me down the aisle when I get married someday, but he passed away due to a heart attack when I was 16 and I was thousands of miles away on a different continent. I didn't even get to say goodbye. I had to turn down some college choices due to financial reasons, and I picked a practical major that had great job prospects but I wasn't necessarily in love with it.

I am a pragmatic person because I am constantly being pulled back to realities, but I am also a dreamer. I had a vague vision that I would eventually follow my true passion for justice and law. Perhaps it is the pessimistic part of me speaking, but I often worry whether I will actually be able to pursue my dream job. As a 20-year-old who is eager to love and to be loved, I often fear that I will never find the love of my life. I know from my past that life is sometimes brutal and unforgiving, so I didn't have my hopes up.

Sometimes I pray for an alternate reality in which I am the girl who has lived in one place her entire life and has friends that she has known her whole life; her grandpa went to her high school graduation and cried with her when she got accepted to study a subject that she is passionate about at a top school. Four years later, she is off to law school and



has a steady relationship with someone she is in love with.

But, that's not my life. When I am in doubt, I often wonder why God wouldn't give me a simple and organized life like that. But, my heart knows that God had a purpose in creating each one of us and we are called to use our gifts given by God to do good things. I wouldn't be the same person I am today without my past. If I am sure that I am called to advocate justice, this would be God's calling; for God is both around and within us. Our faith is often tested by our struggles and doubts in life, but I am faithful and am ready to commit to God's calling.

My grandpa was a devout Christian, and I was raised in the Baptist tradition. But I never found the personal connection with my faith until I started my faith journey at Pres House. I remember seeing the writing "Bring all of who you are" on the Pres House bulletin when I first walked in. On such a large college campus here at UW-Madison, it can be so easy to become just another number; and like all of the other 20-years-olds, we pretend way more often than we like to admit in order to cover up our insecurities. But at Pres House, I can be my true self in the community, and I have a great congregation who supports my faith and my devotion to God.

God is my cornerstone, for the Lord is the order in my messy life. ✝

Zuf Wang

I was born and raised in Xi'an, China, just about where Kansas City would be if you were to superimpose map of China and map of the United States. I came here when I was 14 in seeking for a place where conformity wasn't compulsory. This year, 2017, marks the seventh year I've lived in the States, a place where I've spent my formative years which I call home.

Religion wasn't always part of my life. I was raised more or less agnostic, so when I ended up in an all-boy Catholic high school in Warren, Michigan, it was far from natural. But thank goodness my mom taught me to always have an open mind so I had a relatively easy transition. Kneeling was my most awkward experience. I wondered because, well, I assumed people were sitting down after standing up to sing, but as soon as I saw everyone was one level lower, I realized, oh, we are kneeling. Anyway, Catholicism helped answer many questions that previously were left unanswered, and it became the string that connected all of the dots in my past 16 years of life. As a result, I didn't miss a single day of mass in high school.

When I came to college, my faith was tested. Because of doubts, I decided to take a break from church throughout freshman and sophomore year. Then, there's Pres House. I owe my friendships made here to my roommate Daniel. He asked me to help run slides when junior year started. Since I was looking to find my footing again after drifting around for a year, I agreed happily. That little bit of responsibility was what eventually connected to me to the rest of Pres House. It led me to explore what Pres House is about, and gradually I found myself enjoying going to church and listening to the sermons (my hometown priest mumbled a lot so I never quite knew what he was talking about). If it wasn't for Daniel, I wouldn't be part of this community today. Pres House has since become a home to me, an anchor in the frenzy of college life, but most of all, it has been a solid place of support as I face my life's crossroads.

My immigrant story is very similar to other first-generation immigrants, one that is filled with excitement, perseverance, and uncertainty. One thing

that didn't lack in my last four years was the sense of uncertainty - from, "What should I study?" to "What am I going to do this summer?" to "Should I pursue a Ph.D.?" to "Will I be able to stay at this country that I call home?" Given the new administration and its stance on immigration, this uncertainty has become compounded in the past few months. Over the years, I've learned to embrace uncertainty and view it as a time to prosper as opposed to a time to despair. And strive to do my best for



the things I can control, while trusting that God will handle the rest that is out of my control. Nonetheless, I could only do so when I draw strength from Bible verses, and from the community at Pres House. They keep me sane, keep me motivated, and keep me positive. I treasure these times when I'm challenged to place my full faith in God. After all, these moments keep me humble and grounded. ✝

To hear the Baptism service and student reflections visit our website at this link:
<https://preshouse.org/sunday-worship/listen-to-sunday-sermons/>

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Jeremiah 1:5

PRAYER³: LEARNING TO LIVE IN FAITH

By Jenni Geurink

The presidential election left many of us feeling lost and overwhelmed. Day after day it seemed like there was a constant battering of hateful and divisive legislation and all I wanted to do was tune it out. But as a Christian, it didn't feel right to just sit back and watch my peers suffer while the Bible gives us such clear instructions to love our neighbors. So, with Erica's help and guidance, Jessie Paulson and I endeavored to create a space within our Pres House community to process the news each week. We sought not only to learn and reflect on current events, but to explicitly frame those events within our faith and meaningfully act in response. With this intention, Prayer³ began as a three-fold prayer for justice to seek awareness, ground spiritually, and then respond in just thirty minutes each Wednesday. Broken into quick manageable chunks we begin each week with ten minutes of learning about the issues in the news, and then, for another ten minutes we reflect on why this matters to us as Christians through scripture, prayer, or even silence. Finally, we spend our last ten minutes purposely acting in response as a religious community. One week, in the midst of the proposed "Muslim Ban," we sent dozens of letters of love to our Muslim, Jewish, and immigrant neighbors in our own Madison community. And after so many weeks together, we are finally starting to get comfortable calling and writing our legislators each week in order to make our voices heard. Prayer³ has been such a valuable space to act with intention while caring for ourselves in this increasingly volatile and uncertain political world. In the simplest way, Prayer³ has bound us together in our resistance as we learn how to effectively take witness and stay engaged as God leads us toward a more just world. ✝

WOMEN'S NIGHT OF WORSHIP

By Kara Neitzel

Amidst the demands of daily life, women of Madison were able to find pause in Worship. On April 18, 2017, various faith communities came together in order to indulge concurrently in self-care and the Spirit. The mission of Women's Night of Worship was to foster female community in faith; through multiple stations in the chapel, women were encouraged to spend time engaging in unconventional modes of worship.

The night began with conversation, allowing women from different church communities to greet one another. Over coffee and cookies, women were able to intermingle, with the common ground of faith. Following this time of congregation, women were invited into the chapel to further participate in worship.

Inside the chapel, women could partake in numerous stations of interactive worship. Calligraphy Bible verses were available for women to paint, combining the beauty of Scripture with watercolor art. Dissolvable paper allowed women to tangibly let go of something as they watched their words disappear into the water. Through the practice of yoga, women were able to surrender their bodies and physically connect with God.

While unconventional forms of worship, these practices empowered women to create a space for Christ within their busy schedules. Women's Night of Worship differed from a typical church service in that it was entirely participatory: women were permitted to choose which activities would be most meaningful to them personally.

After the women engaged in the stations, the evening ended in song and prayer. Though the event began as individuals from disparate church bodies, it concluded as one community. Women sang together in one voice and one accord to bring praise to God's name. ✝



SEEING LIFE THROUGH RACE AND FAITH



*Sami Karim Haddad
Grad student
Pres House Member
Speaker at Race and
Faith event*

Pres House and 27 other organizations on the UW-Madison campus hosted the second annual Race and Faith Event on February 7, 2017. More than 325 students and community members attended. The topic of discussion this year was "Seeing Color," shared through story-telling of personal experiences by six diverse members of the greater Madison community. I was asked to share some of my story as a Colombian and Lebanese student who grew up in Indiana.

Leading up to the event, I was able to think critically about the intersection of my race and my childhood in rural southern Indiana. This was a learning experience for me as I had bottled up the racial slurs and behaviors exhibited toward me since my youth. While trying, I was able to formulate these experiences into a narrative I could control and communicate in a way that was conducive to my personality. This proved life-changing as I am now able to look back to those troublesome memories, coat them in comedy, and take pride in how they made me the person I am today. I would like to thank Pres House and the greater Madison community for giving me a voice and an opportunity to face my past in such a beautiful way. ✝

To hear all the stories shared at the Race and Faith: Seeing Color event, visit our website at: <https://preshouse.org/race-faith-2017/>



"There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story within you." –Zora Neale Hurston

"Stories can conquer fear, you know. They can make the heart bigger." –Ben Okri

"We all have stories; by sharing them we begin to tear down walls of fear and create new narratives of hope together. May the story of tonight be that people of all different backgrounds came into this space as strangers, but left recognizing they were family that belonged to one another." –Erica Liu



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LEGACY SOCIETY DONORS HONORED

The Cecil and Janice Lower Legacy Society is an honorary society of individuals whose planned gifts have been or will someday accrue to the Presbyterian Student Center Foundation. Members of the society are honored in Pres House materials and on this recent plaque that adorns the wall in Pridham Lounge. We would like to thank and honor our many generous donors who have left a legacy for the generations of students to come and find a faith home at Pres House. Would you like to leave a legacy to Pres House? Visit www.preshouse.org or call 608.257.1030 ✝

