i did not expect to meet best friends in pillbox-sized rooms in a village long drives away from a city of steel, rust, abandoned warehouses and neighborhoods rapidly gentrifying on the west side but I’m grateful for the exception to my expectations because living in close-knit community yielded bonds of friendship that time doesn’t easily wear.

it was with excitement and trepidation that I plotted my course from the farm to the lofty offices of the disheveled senator what a way to get oriented to the bridge-divide of rural/urban/urbane/rustic

xiasmus
pews from another century
left an impression
on my back while the congregation regaled my soul with sermon, song and exuberant hospitality
protest marches
left an impression on my feet
outside forts and white houses and a recreation center where a black boy was murdered over a toy

a year of exploration political awakening soul searching orientation, disorientation, reorientation
Xplor was not lacking in hardship
Or frustration

but Xplor also
pre pared me for stepping into
adulthood with confidence
Ownership of who I am - successes and failures alike - with Resilience

the year’s lessons extend into
the present
Looking back i know why
i continue on my path
relishing the time and Remaining grateful to be part of that hiram four

As the health and social services general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the National Benevolent Association partners with congregations, regions, general ministries, and a variety of Disciples-related health and social service providers to create communities of compassion and care. Founded in 1887 by six women responding to the needs of the day and on their doorsteps, for more than 130 years the NBA has continued to serve "the least of these." Learn more at www.nbacares.org.