

## **Finding My Place within the Disciples of Christ Church**

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My faith is a big part of my identity. I enjoy getting to have conversations with other people about their spiritual journeys and spiritual practices. One of the many ways I am able to do this is by plugging into a local congregation in whatever city or town I find myself in. I move around quite a bit, so I have been involved in a few different churches, but I have been very hesitant to join any particular denomination. I had an experience about six years ago, where my church leaders practically forbade me from participating in service opportunities with another denomination. The way the entire thing was handled was very hurtful and disappointing. I decided then that I did not need to be affiliated with a particular denomination; I would just continue to learn, grow, love and serve with people from various congregations, denominations, and belief systems.

Last year, however, I made a decision to join the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)! I had been involved with congregations and organizations connected with the denomination for a few years, but I did not make my connection official until last November. It was a big step for me! Getting to go to General Assembly this past July was especially meaningful for me, and I am so grateful that the [National Benevolent Association](#) was able to sponsor me. I got to meet other Disciples and ecumenical partners from across the United States and Canada, and it was amazing to hear their stories, priorities, and hopes. I really felt part of the family and took steps to plug into church-wide efforts. As an international student who is really close with my family, I am always looking for a sense of family and connection wherever I find myself. Feeling like a part of the DOC family at General Assembly was very important to me. I can say without a doubt that my heart is at peace with my decision to join the denomination. I am especially excited about the Church's commitment to ecumenism, social justice, and welcoming all to the table!

At General Assembly, I got to catch up with old friends and make new friends. I had just finished the [XPLORES program](#), so it was wonderful to meet up with folks from my cohort, previous

cohorts, and the new cohort. I lived and worked in Dallas, Texas during my XPLOR residency, so it was wonderful to spend time with Cassie Sos and Byron Nelson, who are currently living in the same house I lived in during my XPLOR residency! I was able to meet the General Minister and President, [Terri Hord Owens](#), in person for the very first time and took a picture with her! I also got to meet folks from the Disciples Divinity House at Vanderbilt, which is where I now live as I pursue a dual degree in Theological Studies and Community Development & Action at Vanderbilt University. During the business sessions at General Assembly, I was able to serve as the microphone monitor. It was wonderful to learn about the resolutions that were brought forward and the reports from various ministries of the Church.

I am thankful to be a part of a family that does not just talk about the good things Jesus did, but actually takes practical steps to answer God's call for justice. Being at the 2019 General Assembly gave me a peek into the many ways that individuals and groups are involved in this "movement for wholeness in a fragmented world." I am inspired to live daily in accordance with this mission. Thank you, NBA, and XPLOR for making this possible!

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*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](http://www.nbacares.org).*