



OVERVIEW OF UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO CAMPUS MINISTRY

We are thankful for how God has worked in and through those participating at Graduate Christian Fellowship. We rejoice in how we have grown together as a community this year; conversations at dinner often erupt in laughter, and people linger after GCF to talk further. Most of the students will still be at UofT next year, and we are hopeful that as new people join that they will find GCF to be a welcoming community and they will be attracted to the deep conversations around faith, academics, and the world around us.

This second semester we built on our theme of being community and living wisely in this particular time. People once again shared their stories, allowing us to understand each other and our passions better, whether that be creative writing or an analysis of love as part of monastic life. As we finished our study of the book of Daniel, our conversations often turned to how the Bible might help us understand the complex political situations of our world today. Our studies on the spiritual disciplines helped students imagine how the disciplines provide ways for us to turn to God and allow God to work in us. Our annual silent retreat, as well as evenings focused on Sabbath, fasting, and a rule of life, provided practical introductions to these disciplines. Last of all, Carol led several evenings about wisdom and thanksgiving as preparation for her leading a retreat in Nepal, as part of her Sabbatical this spring.

The monthly Taizé prayer services that we host with the Ecumenical Chaplaincy and Sti Michael’s Chaplaincy continued to provide a space for people to quiet themselves and turn to God. We are discerning how best to continue these services next year, including encouraging student leaders and developing stronger community and connection with those participating. We’d appreciate your prayers for this.

Emerging Leader at UofT - Brianne

What an incredible gift being an Emerging Leader with the Graduate Christian Fellowship has been for me in the last year. The opportunity to contribute to this year’s theme (Spiritual Disciplines) not only allowed me to share my passion for this theme, but to wrestle in community with questions about what the Spiritual Disciplines look like in the context of the Graduate Christian experience.

Weekly meetings with Brenda and Carol to reflect on the previous GCF meeting and plan the forthcoming one enabled me to practice caring for others in the context of intentional community, as well as practice discerning and partnering with the Spirit’s work in that context. Meeting weekly with Brenda and Carol also provided a structure for mentorship that was deeply meaningful during a personally turbulent time. Moreover, their wisdom was deeply influential as I discerned what ministry might look like for me on the University of Toronto’s campus.

I leave this position inspired by the possibilities of what campus ministry can be and what the Lord may have in store for me going forward.



OVERVIEW OF MINISTRY AT YORK UNIVERSITY

This school year brought new connections and strengthened relationships within the Logos community. From the beginning of the Fall term, we had opportunities to collaborate with other student groups and communities across campus, where our Christian message was welcomed and valued even within secular spaces. We are encouraged to see Logos continue to serve as a Christian voice that is regularly invited into conversations about community engagement, social justice, food security, popular culture, theology, and interfaith dialogue.

Throughout the year, we also had the privilege of supporting, mentoring, and walking alongside students during important moments of transition. Some students were preparing to graduate and facing uncertainty about entering the job market, while others were dealing with the pressures and challenges of student life. Our Soup for Thought gatherings provided a welcoming environment where students could share homemade soup and engage in meaningful conversations about faith and life. For many, these gatherings became a safe space to reconnect with their faith and build relationships with fellow Christians.

Further programs allowed us to meet students where they were and respond to their needs with care and understanding. Our Free Listening Sessions provided an opportunity for students to sit for a few minutes and simply be heard by members of our campus ministry team. At Spiritualitea, students could drop in for a warm drink and open conversations about faith, which became an important space of connection and support.

As we reflect on this year, we are grateful to witness the ongoing transformation taking place in the lives of students. Their passion, faith, and commitment continue to grow through the ministry of Logos, and this is reflected not only in their involvement within local churches but also in the way they engage with and serve their wider communities.





A LONG JOURNEY: STORY OF FORMER INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

In 2018, a young student from China came to York and was feeling alone and homesick. Her father advised her to “look for Christians—they are nice and will help you learn Canadian culture.” She found one who befriended her, took her to meet family over the holidays, and invited her to attend LOGOS gatherings. Showing curiosity about Christianity, she began reading Bible stories with that first friend and meeting with one of the chaplaincy team to better understand the biblical story and the personal impact the Christian faith has on her friends.

Upon graduation, Cloe (not her given name) let us know of her plans to take up master’s studies in a region that had recently experienced political unrest. Recognizing how challenging it would be, we sent her off with our prayers. Cloe also prayed for us, as she had done many times over the years, even though she was not a confessing Christian at the time.

Cloe was open to God, and we could see that God was working in her life. Before she left, Cloe asked if she could keep the Jesus Storybook Bible we had read together as an introduction to the story of God. We were delighted with the request, especially when she added, “I want to read it to my nieces and nephews.”

Recently we heard Cloe made a visit to her first friend on her way to graduate studies abroad, and she shared that she had been baptised back in China. A simple statement of profound truth, and a long journey that we are deeply thankful that Logos could be part of.

FREE LISTENING? WHAT’S THAT?

In March, I (Steve) met Rose in a crowded hallway at York University. She was walking alone—shoulders slightly hunched, eyes fixed ahead—like she had somewhere important to be, but nowhere she really belonged. I introduced myself, asked her what she was studying, what year she was in... and then I asked a simple question: “How’s your day going?”

She paused: “It’s just like every other day. I work, I go to class... there’s no time for anything else.” And then she laughed awkwardly. “It’s actually kind of good that I don’t have friends. I wouldn’t have time for them anyway.”

As she kept talking, it became clear—she wasn’t just busy. She was alone. She told me she doesn’t really talk to anyone. Every interaction is transactional. Purpose-driven. Get through the day. And then she said something that just... stayed with me. “I used to have faith. But I don’t even have time for that anymore. And honestly... those people just made me feel guilty. God just feels far away. Like... not really involved in my life.”

We were standing in the middle of a busy university hallway—students rushing past us—and yet in that moment, it felt incredibly quiet. So I asked her if she had ever tried something simple—just breathing a prayer.

We stood there together.

Breathing in: *The Lord is my shepherd.*

Breathing out: *I shall not want.*

Right there. In the hallway. After a minute, she looked at me and said, “God is closer than I think... isn’t He?”

As she walked away, I remember thinking: How many students are walking these same hallways every day... carrying questions about life, about faith... and feeling completely alone?



Emerging Leader at YorkU - Nick

This year as the emerging leader has been quite beneficial as I prepare to become a pastor in the near future. Having served in leadership at Graduate Christian Fellowship at UofT, my experience at York this year was unique: I found that campus ministry sometimes requires a more entrepreneurial spirit. Rather than the large ministry gatherings I knew from my experience at Grand Valley State or the small graduate gatherings at UofT, ministry at York consisted more of one-on-one interactions with students. I was surprised when my first tabling experience was met with a confrontational group of orthodox Christians looking to debate.

As I reflect on my experience at York this year, I feel as though my primary takeaway is a renewed vision for outreach that I can take into future ministry. The “Free listening” experiment has yielded remarkable fruit. Despite the fact that my conversations often went in directions that were difficult, and sometimes even uncomfortable, I found myself enjoying meeting different people, and processing with them the challenges they were facing. As I consider what outreach could look like in pastoral ministry in the future, this is a vision I hope to carry forward wherever the Lord might lead in the future.



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