

## **University and Young Adult Chaplain 2025 Report to the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh**

2025 has been another great year for the University and Young Adult Chaplaincy in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh. I have maintained my focus in addressing the “relational poverty” that so many students and young adults are experiencing.

Many young people are lonely and afraid, and suffering deeply and anonymously as a result. It remains my conviction that what they seek is the personal, the authentic, and the organic, the kind of relating that is shared amongst Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In a word, they yearn for *love*. This quality of relationship that Jesus died to unleash on the earth primarily happens one-by-one, and often with all kinds of fits and starts. It does not demand a “come to us” and “become part of what we’re doing” mentality, but a “go to them” and “become part of what God is already doing in their lives” mindset. This means not starting groups but finding them; not designing events but discovering them; and receiving hospitality before offering it. Neither the group, the event, nor the action is the goal; it’s all about the person, each utterly unique ends in themselves, created to know and be known.

At its core, I believe chaplaincy to university students and young adults in our present context consists in relating (as Jesus would if He were us) to named persons in the midst of their lives, lives to which Jesus has called them, in which He is already doing more than any of us could ever think or imagine. As a chaplain, I walk alongside the person to whom God calls me, no matter who they may be, seeking to help them come to know their dignity, embrace their freedom, live creatively in faith, and love generously in hope.

Practically speaking, a significant part of my work has been to “meet people where they are,” to work in and around their schedules and locations. Coffee shops, restaurants, campuses, job sites, homes, you name it: where people are, that’s where I try to be. This is how trust is built, the key component in every healthy relationship, especially where fear is prevalent. As a minister of the Gospel, I have to earn the right to invite people into the Life Jesus has made available to all by showing them that they matter, and that I genuinely care for them, simply because they are alive, wherever they are, whomever they may be, regardless of how they do or do not respond to me.

This year, I’ve met with students and young adults one-on-one over 200 times, and for at least an hour each time. During that same time period I hosted 50 dinners in my home for students and young adults. I have also been able to host a number of people that we’ve ministered to over the years who are no longer local but came to town to spend time with us. I’ve been able to attend several events on campus at the invitation and request of students, and also hosted a number of gatherings for student in my home. Additionally, I currently have 3 young people reading a walk thru the Bible by Leslie Newbigin, as well as one reading Christ Plays In Ten Thousand Places by Eugene Peterson. This year, I also led students through *The Existentialist’s Survival Guide* by Gordon Marino, *The Great Divorce* by CS Lewis, and *Simply Christian* by NT Wright. I have also started a young adult reading group that meets monthly; we’re reading and discussing *Unspoken Sermons* by George MacDonald. I make sure to communicate with multiple students and young adults daily, checking up on them, inquiring as to what they are thinking about, how they are feeling, and what’s going on in their lives. I have also raised \$650 per month to pay for my expenses.

I’m encouraged by how I’ve seen Jesus work in the lives of those I have ministered to, and I look forward to what 2026 holds.