Community at the Crossing

Ask the Alumni

How have you seen transformation this year?

Tracey: Growing in understanding how different denominations express faith, yet share a deep unity in Christ.

Marc Ella: I entered community life feeling disconnected and sort of cynical about my faith. Over the course of the year, through retreats, community time, and spiritual accompaniment, I was able to develop personal prayer practices that both respect the tradition I come from and resonate with me. I feel God's Spirit flowing through liturgy in a way I never used to before.

Daniel: Rhythms of prayer transform me.

Chris: Day-by-day in CATC I did not see or feel an enormous transformation within myself–but looking back, everything is different now. I make decisions differently, I pray differently, I sing differently. My experience in CATC is something I will continue to carry forward and it will continue to transform me in ways I have not yet seen.

What is something you've learned this year?

Daniel: Silent retreats illuminate how I am chained to my phone and give me the tools to freedom from screens.

What has been a surprise for you this year?

Marc Ella: I was raised in the culture of high Anglican Church choir (Carols from King's, anyone?)- I'm right at home in the world of evensongs and elaborate processions. That being said… I surprised myself with how much I grew to appreciate Christian contemporary music this year. I look forward to times of free-flowing praise and worship just as much as the beautiful ritual of Episcopal liturgies—something I never would've thought a year ago!

Daniel: How powerful the stations of the cross can be when done in community.

Chris: This year, I was surprised by how pleasant religious disagreement can actually be.

What have you learned about difference this year?

Tracey: That differences can be a source of richness when embraced as diversity.

Daniel: Our differences can reveal our shared need for Jesus and draw us all closer to him.

Chris: I have learned that difference is not a problem to be solved. Openness to other people's different ways of encountering God always leads to very spiritually edifying experiences.

Why is this community important?

Tracey: It creates space to grow, ask questions, and pursue God alongside others.

Marc Ella: In an increasingly polarized world, it's easy to reduce other Christians and denominations to the loudest voices online and at the pulpit. This community pulls us away from those assumptions, drawing us towards one another as people who love God in a beautiful variety of ways, which go well beyond our different religious practices!

Daniel: It will show you how big and beautiful the body of Christ is.

Chris: This community is important because it draws together young people without requiring 100% agreement. We brought together different gifts and insights from our traditions and lent them to one another, encountering God in new ways throughout.

What's a favourite memory from this year?

Tracey: The 4-day silent retreat that deepened my closeness with God beautifully complemented by the sessions focused on spiritual indifference.

Marc Ella: In November, the community made a silent retreat in Val-de-Paix, a retreat house outside of Montreal, and when we arrived, there were 6 inches of snow on the ground! A lot of my retreat focused on finding childlike wonder and joy in God's love- one of my fondest memories was making snowmen with other community members, in full silence but enjoying one another's company in the beauty of creation.

Daniel: Seeing the Cathedral on St. Francis Day.

What does it mean to you, to be interrupted by God?

Tracey: Letting God take priority even when it means pushing through exhaustion to show up and be present.

Daniel: To hold treasured things with an open hand for God to take away.

Chris: To me, being interrupted by God means learning when to stop speaking and instead starting to listen for His response.

What made you apply?

Tracey: A desire to deepen my understanding of theology and biblical studies.

Daniel: Hearing about Ignatian retreats and Amy Jill Levine.

Chris: made you apply?
I applied because I was deeply moved by the idea of being “interrupted” by God. My trouble has always been that I think God wants to transform us all not only individually, but as communities and as societies–likewise, I wanted to find myself in a group of people who do not necessarily know exactly how God is calling out to us, (or “interrupting” us), but who want to discern His call while sharing life together in friendship.

What would you say to somebody considering Community at the Crossing?

Marc Ella: As the Angel said to Mary- “be not afraid!” If you’re looking for a place to deepen your faith, ask questions, and connect to Christians across cultures and denominations, this is it!

Daniel: Pray. Visit the cathedral. Talk to Chemin Neuf. Talk to your pastors and spiritual mentors.

Chris: If you are considering joining the Community at the Crossing but are uncertain if your life can fully accommodate the commitment, I urge you to just jump in. When I was deciding whether or not I could fit CATC into my life, I realized that I had already made up my mind that I wanted to do it, and was only hesitating out of fear: when I tried to consider my decision to join more even-handedly, I realized that I had nothing to lose by following the program step-by-step and day-by-day and watching how it transformed my habits in all areas of life. My experiences here will last me for the rest of my life, and I wish all this and more to anyone who is considering joining the next cohort.

Cohort 25-26 Members

Tara, Nic, Meghan, Travis, Katie, Brittany, Ava, Kelly, Tomoya

Tracey. Currently in denominational discernment, Data & Strategy Specialist at the Research Foundation of CUNY.

Marc Ella. Episcopalian, Youth Educator, Manhattan

Daniel. Evangelical, Librarian, 27, an island east of New Jersey.

Chris. Practicing Episcopalian, employed in Education, 25.