

# H2O CHURCH OSU UPDATE

*By: Jon Shah*

In the process of sending out the fabulous Indiana University church plant team to Bloomington this fall, all of us were very curious to see what sort of changes God might have in store for us here in Columbus. As usual, God did more than we could have asked or imagined in the last few months, not just enabling us to “survive” this season, but continuing to transform our church for the better. In the last few months we have seen a new generation of students and graduates get involved in our community, the Gospel is going out and bearing fruit, and we are watching our younger leaders thrive.

When the local church realizes that they are a community that is SENT, they need to be prepared to see God consistently raise up the next generation of leaders to replace the ones that go out into the world. This fall we have observed that reality at every level of leadership within H2O church. We have brand new church directors on campus (Vivake Baranwal), in operations (Abby Lewis), and leadership development (Meghan Winters) who are using their gifts and flourishing. In addition we have a new generation of student leaders who are leading the charge in engaging our campus with the Gospel in new and creative ways.

This fall semester we knew we needed to inject some fresh life into our outreach on campus, so we started with prayer! Every Tuesday and Thursday a handful of us are gathering at 7am to pray for the campus and that the Gospel would ring out from our congregation. We have coupled that with a few larger events geared towards allowing us to serve and connect with those who might not ordinarily step into a church. We had a tailgate party, a barn dance, our annual Thanksgiving dinner, and have been out on the Oval every Friday morning serving free coffee to the students and faculty. We continue to try anything and everything to demonstrate the love of Christ & build relationships with these Buckeyes.

In the city we also continue to learn how to love and serve those in our neighborhood and workplaces. Slowly but surely we are having an impact in Columbus. In fact, while our later worship service on campus has plenty of seats still available, our city venue is filling up fast, so we are beginning the process of figuring out whether we need to expand to a third worship service. Please continue to pray for us as we discern how to continue to be a light to the city!

# IU CHURCH PLANT UPDATE

*By: Kevin Cody*

Our H2O church plant at Indiana University is officially one semester old! And wow, have we seen God do a lot.

As of August, we really only knew one IU student in a meaningful way, and had nowhere to meet on campus, no official student organization, and very little else - except a confidence God had called us to start a church at Indiana University and a team of people full of faith in God to build His church.

Since then, just a few of the highlights of what we’ve seen God do: we’ve seen at least 3 people put their faith in Jesus. People with little spiritual background have been involved, but so have people who had a strong church background but then struggled in their faith during their first year or two at college - we’ve even had seniors who are just now getting involved in a church for the first time ever in college. We’ve seen students

express an eagerness to learn to share their faith, and some have taken concrete steps to do so. In other words, God has been moving in individual hearts, which is the most important thing we could have prayed for!

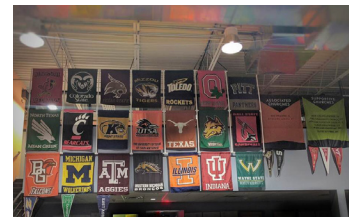
And, simultaneously, we’ve seen God working to open doors for us. We now have an official student organization affiliated with our church! But even before that, we were able to be part of various campus events and even meet regularly in buildings on campus. All of this was extremely important to us because we see it as our mission to go to where the students are, just as Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

We’re believing God for big things in 2019 and beyond - and we have great reasons for it, because of how we’ve seen Him at work so far!

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## FALL EVENT PHOTOS!



## SLICE OF LIFE

*At H2O Church, we get excited about what God is doing in individual lives. Each week at service, we have some give what we call a “Slice of Life”: essentially, the story of how God is working in their midst. God uses these slices to glorify himself and encourage and strengthen the body, and our prayer is that it would do the same for you.*



## SLICE OF LIFE FROM H2O CITY: RACHEL OLSON

I grew up in a Christian home and went to church every Sunday. I attended church camps and youth groups as far back as I can remember. It was always my main activity going on outside of school. That’s when, during a church summer camp in middle school, I was surprised when the pastor asked us to consider the moment we were saved – and I realized I couldn’t quite put my finger on any specific moment, I sort of just assumed it must have happened subconsciously or something during all the church stuff I was at. So that’s now “my moment” – the moment where I specifically prayed the prayer and told God that I knew he was the one true God, that He came to Earth and saved me, and I asked for forgiveness for all my many sins.

I’ve struggled with sharing my story because it can seem so plain to me. By God’s provision I was born into a Christian family, in America, and never had to worry about my basic needs being met – so many blessings I take for granted and I always wonder why God has blessed me so abundantly when I am so undeserving. Because of these blessings, and my naturally introverted, risk-adverse personality, I’ve never really been tempted to do anything really considered “wild” by this world. But that doesn’t mean my sin struggles are any less than any other. My sin struggles continually come in form of selfish ambition, pride, and jealousy.

So, a bit more about myself – Christian upbringing, Christian girl. I was an introvert who was home before curfew – if I even went out at all – and graduated high school early to work more-plus, high school wasn’t fun to me anyway. I was always hyper focused on academics and my resume. I avoided doing anything crazy just out of fear of a blemish on my record. I can become so easily prideful and selfish.

Something reoccurring that stands out in my life has been moving. I have lived in 9 different homes, across 6 different states geographically ranging from Pennsylvania to Utah. And no, I wasn’t in the military. The latest move was last summer, from Omaha Nebraska to here. Each move was different and special in some way but this one felt big. My husband, Broderick

got matched at OSU for his residency, and for me this was an opportunity to trust God because I knew nothing about Ohio or what type of job I could even get there. I feared my network and resume I had worked so hard to build would be meaningless in a new state.

Which it sort of was. But again and again, God provides more and more than I could have expected. He allowed this transition away from family, friends, and a good job in Nebraska to be peaceful. He gave me a job that I can honestly say 100% was not a result of my own resume or network but simply His provision. It humbled me and has grown my faith. Both my job and Broderick’s job requires us to be apart at times, either because of traveling or working long hours. During these periods it becomes even more obvious that God’s love encompasses us together and individually; and that love is what I base my core self on.

There’s maybe a few years for me in between moves that my life just seems slow. But regardless of whatever season I’m in, I try to fight to grow closer to God, not comfortable. I have found that for my heart, volunteering and giving of myself is a way to continue to fight my sin struggles and grow closer with the Spirit and the Lord’s heart. Volunteering challenges me to look away from myself and to others. I start by looking for needs in my community that I can help with. In Omaha, I connected with Thai refugees, which started to soften my heart for the refugees in America. In Columbus, I found the Bridge which is involved in the education of many Somalis in our community. This program opened my eyes to other religions and cultures that have expanded my narrow frame of mind. Beyond that, there was a need for City Life Group leaders in my group. God put on my heart to walk deeper in obedience to Him. So, in a step of faith, I have begun leading (the best) CLG with some of the most encouraging people I have ever met. They pour back into me and give selflessly.

In short, each day I continue to learn that God uses the ordinary, the introverted, and the simple, to bring Him glory!