

# OHIO CHRISTIAN

THE OHIO CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE | WINTER 2018



*Preparing Students for Service*

FESTIVAL OF CAROLS IN THE NEW  
MINISTRY AND PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

PAGE 20



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Ohio Christian University prepares students to serve effectively in the church and society by providing a holistic, Christ-centered, biblically integrated education in the Wesleyan tradition.

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### ACCREDITATION:

- Higher Learning Commission
- Teacher Education Accreditation Council
- Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education

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OHIO CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

American Quaker philosopher and theologian Elton Trueblood states, "The test of the vitality of a religion is to be seen in its effect upon the culture." In other words, no effect, no vitality. Similarly, the test of vitality of a Christian university is to be seen in its effect upon the Church and society. If graduates from a Christian university do not go into the culture, shaping professions of the world and change them for the glory of God by being the "salt and light," then one might rightly question the spiritual vitality of these graduates' alma mater.

Ohio Christian University declares our mission is to prepare students to serve effectively in the Church and society. This simple mission has at least three profound implications. First, in a world clamoring for "leaders", serving is not the cultural norm. Servant leadership is the normal Christian posture. Second, the Church: research shows, repeatedly, that college students who have been raised in the church do not return to the church for at least a decade after graduation. Our job at Ohio Christian University is to not only prepare and equip the next generation of pastors and missionaries, but also to raise up a generation of lay leaders who are

committed to the Church. Third, our society: At OCU we seek to educate students to enter every culture-shaping profession in order to win as many to Christ as possible. We need OCU alums at the right seat, at the right table, saying the right things to the right people in order to flavor and preserve the culture with the "salt and light" of the Kingdom. This means we need to strengthen all the majors we offer so that our graduates are among the most desired. It means we take seriously our call to offer the best major we can for pastors, as well as for political science majors, for missionaries, and for pre-medicine.

Commenting on the state of religion in America over 50 years ago, Trueblood wrote, "We do not expect for the most part to find the Gospel centered in a burning conviction which will make men and women . . . go to the end of the earth, alter the practices of government, redirect culture, and remake civilization."

Actually, at Ohio Christian University, with the guiding, helping, directing hand of the Holy Spirit, that is exactly what we expect. In fact, it is not only our expectation, it is also our mission.

STUDENT  
CENTERED



ANGELA FLOWERS

*Angela Flowers, M.Ed.*, a professor in the Department of Teacher Education, advises students, and provides clinical supervision for early childhood education. “I am excited to be helping our future educators become the very best teachers and leaders! Teaching is truly a calling, and I believe our students are going to change the world of education,” she explains. Angela attends The First Church of God in Chillicothe and serves on its Board of Christian Education.

# ACADEMIC UPDATE

BY DR. HANK KELLY, PROVOST

Teacher Education is expanding. We expect the Ohio Department of Higher Education to approve a Bachelor of Science in Education with a major in Mild/Moderate Intervention K-12 Specialist and Pre-Kindergarten Special Needs Endorsement. Professor Angela Flowers will lead this new area.

General Education will offer new electives to help students find passion areas beyond majors. Students will gain broad knowledge, think critically, communicate clearly, develop analytical and problem solving skills, and apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.

We prepare students for multiple careers since many will change careers several times. Graduates gain knowledge to succeed at work and have an impact for God. We anticipate new programs in Biology, Chemistry, Communications, Math, Philosophy, and Physics. Adult and Graduate Studies offers English, History, Human Services, and Political Science now.

An integrated Christian worldview shapes students’ thinking and heart toward God. In the Bible, “to know” usually means to understand and act upon it. OCU graduates become people who can put such understanding into action.

# INNOVATION

BY DR. BRADFORD SAMPLE, VICE PRESIDENT,  
ENROLLMENT

Ohio Christian University is blessed to have faculty and staff who have served for some time. This length of service provides stability and institutional memory necessary for high quality programs. However, we also need fresh perspectives to leaven the institution to new heights. Drs. Lynn Lease and Jon Tomlinson, featured here, joined Dean Scott Marsee in 2017 to launch initiatives and revamp programs. Their energy and creativity is infectious.

*Dr. Jon Tomlinson* is the new Director of Business Programs for the Adult and Graduate School. “What drew me to OCU was its Christ-centered mission and my hope to further it using business tools,” explains Tomlinson, who earned his BS and MBA from Wright State University and PhD from Regent University. “So far, we’ve been very busy credentialing our 100 adjunct faculty members, and are now reviewing the curricula for the University’s AA, BA, and MBA requirements, including concentrations.”



DR. JON TOMLINSON



DR. LYNN LEASE

*Dr. Lynn Lease* started her career in Student Affairs in Residence Life and transitioned to Academic Affairs after teaching 7th grade language arts. Lynn founded a faculty development center for improving student learning and retention. She developed orientations, educational technology trainings, instructional design and teaching workshops, learning communities, and curriculum improvement and assessment.

“I love the challenge of brainstorming new ideas, building pieces of the puzzle, including partners and stakeholders, putting pieces together, and bringing new programs to life. Creativity keeps it interesting,” says Lease about creating OCU Online Plus.

“The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to learn... and change.”

-Carl Rogers



# ADVOCATING FOR SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN THE WORKPLACE

“Act of service” is a term normally connected to labor in a ministry. We easily connect an act of service to a ministry’s purpose when members serve voluntarily in spiritual activity for the organization. In secular workplaces, however, we often fail to apply servant leadership ideals as we labor beside coworkers, respond to supervisors’ requests, or manage the needs of clients. Often we fail to recognize how valuable our work is before the Lord and that He places great importance on our activity in the workplace.

In his article “Work: A Holy Calling,” Professor Jerram Barr explores the importance of engaging in the act of service in the workplace. He identifies two key elements regarding our labor:

1. God declares service to others in the workplace is important. Barr shares Apostle Paul’s instructions in Colossians 3:23 that we should approach our activity in the workplace with the commitment that we are working for the Lord.
2. Our work has value because we are offering it to the Lord. Barr suggests that while our job may not be holy, our commitment to offer our labor to God as service has eternal implications.

In 2016, OCU introduced a BA in Human Services designed to integrate the principles of servant leadership into the workplace. Students critically explore social advocacy in a Biblical worldview with the outcome of making a difference in their community. They are exposed to the importance of ethical leadership in the workplace, advocacy and public policy that brings about positive change, and how to be effective leaders who serve the needs of employees and clients.

“Career opportunities in human services are expected to grow 11% annually through 2024, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2016-17 Edition,” explains William Harle, Jr., Director of Humanities and Social Sciences, College of Adult and Graduate Studies. “We are pleased that in the past year 100 OCU students have selected the Human Services major – a fine match of mission and marketplace.”



To enable Teacher Education majors to succeed in this challenge, OCU is hosting a training workshop on trauma-informed care led by Pickaway County Board of Disabilities on June 4th and 5th. Mandated by the State of Ohio, this practicum is offered for any teacher in Ohio at no cost.

Teachers from Pickaway, Ross, Fayette, and Franklin counties will participate. “We are providing our facility for this essential training as a service to those who serve us,” explains Dr. Valerie Jones, chair of OCU’s Teacher Education Department. OCU students attending the workshop will receive credit.

In 2017, Teacher Education faculty and students attended a Propel Ohio Conference on trauma-informed care best practices. They discovered that OCU’s curriculum addresses much on this subject. “We are pleased to be training on trauma-informed care already,” explains Dr. Valerie Jones. “Our teaching methods and classroom management, following Piaget and Dewey, includes corrective ‘discipline through love’. This approach is integral to the Christian worldview that imbues every discipline here.”

Teachers learn to handle disruptive behavior by fostering a caring parent/child relationship. The teacher takes a misbehaving student aside and reasons with them so that they understand the corrective action is motivated from caring, to help them behave and become successful in learning and socialization. Students are encouraged to learn from recognition of and correction for wrong behavior via reasoning that builds understanding, aligned with the Piaget learning model. “Today, students need a strong sense of calling to meet the challenges of disruptive behaviors presented in their classrooms,” emphasizes Jones.

# PREPARING SUPER TEACHERS FOR TOUGH-LOVE CHALLENGES

In 2018, OCU’s Teacher Education Department is participating in classroom management skills training that addresses student development deficits. Focusing on issues that impact learning, such as effects of divorce, poverty, and substance abuse, requires equipping teachers with proven intervention skills.

Pickaway Board of Disabilities trainers Bryston McKnight and Mary Nelle Faye are providing skills training that includes methods presentation, sharing ideas, and discussion of working out plans for using the featured techniques in the classroom.

Disruptive students are troubled by environmental issues that interfere with stable conditions that support learning, such as living in homes broken by divorce, partying, and absent or negligent parents who leave their children to stay up late taking care of younger siblings. “Such students can’t get their homework done due to severe disruptions that undermine normal learning,” explains Jones. “In the classroom the skilled teacher talks to these children and demonstrates caring. This encourages the children to trust the teacher. The teacher becomes a mentor when there is not one at home. The skilled teacher is a surrogate parent out of necessity and compassion.”

The trauma-informed care training workshop addresses typical cases, plans, and tools for handling disruptive behaviors to enable effective teaching. Specifics cover handling lack of impulse control in children born of opiate-addicted parents. The goal is to keep such children in class without disrupting others. “Teachers need to know how this works. The opioid crisis is everywhere,” Jones explains. “Teachers need to organize activities to achieve their goals. Of thirty students, six may have brain damage. Such children will be entering school when OCU teaching majors begin their careers.”

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**“More and more teaching is a mission-field occupation. Practitioners must have the skills of teachers, nurses, psychologists, social workers, counselors, and parents,” Jones continues. “We may be the only stable thing in the lives of some students.”**

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Common Core sets national standards for each grade but does not take into account individual education plans (IEPs). The Core approach overlooks missed class/ learning time in the past year due to family instabilities. “We aim to provide educationally appropriate education,” says Jones. “We find out where students are in their learning and take them where they need to be through

scaffolding and support, developmentally appropriate education. Multiple approaches are needed to shepherd the entire class along in meeting the Common Core standard.”

What responsibility have parents for helping their children learn? “We teachers want parents to support learning at home. We apply a community focus in secondary education. Communities today are different than they were in 1950s, where traditional families predominated. Today, more parents are absent. Some are working poor with multiple jobs. Some are simply neglectful. These situations undermine children learning. We always need to be very mindful of every child’s background. It’s not optional.”

Teachers can connect with parents in annual conferences, but only if parents attend. If students have been truant, parents must attend. When parents do not participate the teacher, intervention specialist, and school psychologist must make decisions for those students. Students are tested and referred to specialists based on their IEPs. Some parents ask for referrals and testing if children’s learning issues are apparent. IQ testing and other tests are used to help identify issues. Today one in five students have dyslexia.

The trauma-informed care initiative addresses these challenges with hope. Teachers can and do change children’s lives. They can and do break cycles of disruption. They can achieve very positive long-term outcomes, in spite of frustrating situations that work against best efforts. Well-equipped, skilled teachers truly can be frontline ‘super stars’ lifting up the upcoming generations.



If you would like to attend the Trauma Informed Care Training in June, please contact Dr. Valerie Jones at [vjones3@ohiochristian.edu](mailto:vjones3@ohiochristian.edu) by May 31, 2018

# SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & GOVERNMENT STUDENTS TOUR WASHINGTON, D.C.

Twenty-six Ohio Christian University School of Business & Government® students attended a two-day tour of Washington, D.C. and Mount Vernon, Virginia, on October 23 and 24, 2017.

The students toured George Washington's home and Mount Vernon Plantation led by Mr. Robert Morrison, Family Research Council Senior Fellow, and Dr. Phil Burgess, chief executive of Annapolis Institute and member of SB&G's Government Advisory Council.

The students visited Catholic University of America's Columbus School of Law where they listened to presentations by Dennis Coyle, Chair Constitutional Law, Comparative Law and Political Culture, and Robert Destro, Professor of Law and Director of the School's Interdisciplinary Program in Law & Religion.

The students met also with foreign policy directors from the U.S. State Department and capped this experience with an after-hours tour of the United States Capitol led by Polly Jordan, wife of Congressman Jim Jordan.

The School of Business & Government's annual Washington, D.C. Experience enables students to meet various leaders of their federal government. They interact face-to-face with federal government leaders and discuss how governing theory and practice coincide. To graduate, SB&G students must attend one of these annual Washington, D.C. Experiences.

# 7<sup>TH</sup> ROUNDTABLE PREPS SB&G STUDENTS FOR COMPETITION

Ohio Christian University's School of Business & Government® hosted its seventh annual Small Business Round Table on Tuesday, November 14, 2017.

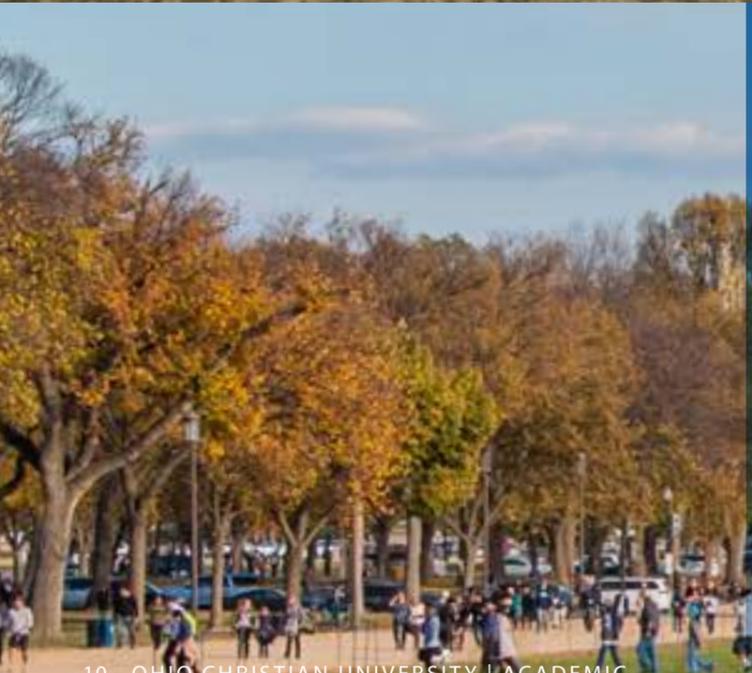
Over eighty OCU students and five business people, most of whom own small businesses, discussed what it takes to start and manage a small business and how to stay successful.

Discussants on this year's roundtable included Mike Cessna, owner of My Auto Care; Chris Farrell, owner of Farrell Fit; Jim Cook, owner of Cooks Creek Golf Club; and Megan VanBuskirk and Ana Purpero, owners of Paper City Coffee. Students engaged with the business people, asking practical and applicable questions. The business owners emphasized the importance of

character, hard work, time management, finding your passion, and discipline as significant success factors in business ownership.

Many participating students are working on business plans for OCU's annual \$10,000 Business Plan Competition, being held this coming spring. Consequently, the roundtable discussion was particularly useful and informative for students who are creating plans.

OCU's School of Business & Government places high value and importance on practical learning, which is why business people are continually invited to the school for dialogues with students.





# STUDENTS SERVE IN PUERTO RICO

BY CHELSI MASON, BA IN EMERGENCY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT, '19

On November 25, 2017, the members of the Ohio Christian University Emergency Management program flew to Puerto Rico to assist The Salvation Army with distribution of food and water to the Puerto Rican towns of Juncos, Humacao, and Las Piedras. Shortly after the OCU team's arrival, cadets from The Salvation Army joined forces to help change the lives of local residents impacted by hurricane Maria.

For many OCU students this trip was a plethora of firsts. These included setting a record for the most meals distributed throughout the community. During the first short week, the group distributed an astounding 115,887 meals, along with 129,997 cases of water. With temperatures reaching the high eighties, the relief teams joined to reach those residents stranded in valleys and on mountaintops.

These records could not have been achieved without the hard work and determination from individuals and groups around the country. From those in the warehouse, to those on the frontlines in operations teams, volunteers were there to relieve the community. Throughout six days, 174 Salvation Army volunteers, which included OCU's EM members, AmeriCorp, local volunteers, and the Washington Conservation Corp, contributed a remarkable 1,387 hours to assisting Puerto Rico.

During this time, multiple encounters affected the volunteers. Many encounters were spiritually eye-opening and influenced people by expanding their horizons and thinking. The volunteers encountered once-in-a-lifetime experiences in the mountains of Las Piedras.

"We noticed the rock and were amazed at the fact that it stopped right before it smashed into a house," explains OCU EM student Brooke Lezotte. "There is no way it didn't have enough momentum to carry it through the house from the size of the hill it rolled down. However, even in the 90-degree heat, I got goosebumps when we noticed the statue of Jesus placed right in front of the house. His stretched arms were broken at the elbows. It was an incredible example and reminder of how much Jesus sacrificed for us and how we experience His miracles even today."

OCU EM team member Cayla Allen describes another greatly affecting incident. While distributing food and water to a community her team encountered a family with an older woman and a young boy. The young boy had lost his family during the hurricane and has yet to locate them. The woman took the boy into her home and became a surrogate mother to him. Allen explains, "This is an example of the spiritual role we fill while delivering food and water. As members of a Christian organization, for us moments like these not only mean something to the people we are serving, but also they change who we are as members of God's army: The Salvation Army."

The people of Puerto Rico have shown strength and resilience in the face of great adversity. They may not have power, but they have each other and the support of friends and family. Lending a helping hand is only the beginning, and for now, that is enough.

## ... AND ASSIST SALVATION ARMY RELIEF EFFORTS

BY JERICA DONALD, BA IN EMERGENCY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS, '19

The blazing sun in Puerto Rico did not stop Salvation Army Volunteers from distributing meals and water to many people in the south—eastern division of the island.

Our Salvation Army Emergency Disaster Services (EDS) operations team used a bottleneck version of distribution in Las Piedras, Puerto Rico. Using that technique of distribution enabled us to serve 27,552 meals and bottles of water to people in need.

This was a critical time where teamwork was needed, and it was achieved. Relief teamwork can be difficult, particularly with regard to timely communication. Luckily for our team, this day communication went well. As it is often said by many in the EDS: "Teamwork makes the dream work."

Another challenge for relief distribution relies on effective teamwork when a team is sent into an unknown area, in this case into the remote mountain areas which, until now, were untouched by efforts to distribute food and water. At the time of our assistance, this area was just starting to be addressed with distribution of goods. Work there is not finished. It will be an area on our future agenda because it is an area of greatest need.

# 500<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!

Ohio Christian University celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation on October 31. Over 125 students and guests attended this illuminating event in the Melvin and Laura Maxwell Library.

The special anniversary colloquium quickly filled available seating and overflowed onto a nearby stairwell. Attendees arriving last listened from vantage points between library stacks. Regardless of tight quarters, once assembled, the gathering had an atmosphere of warm community and intense interest.

Circleville Trinity Lutheran Church's Reverend Gerhard Kraus gave an engaging presentation that reviewed Reformation history and framed Martin Luther in an historical context that students and guests easily appreciated. Listeners who are studying early Church history found this presentation especially enlightening.

Following the keynote, a panel formed for a Q&A session. Students Abby Adams and Marcus Chong joined Reverend Kraus and Professor Ben Williamson in the lively discussion.

Professor Monty Lobb traveled to Kiev, Ukraine to speak at the 500th anniversary celebration of the Reformation in early November.

In greeting the assembly, he spoke about the importance of integrating Christian character into personal relationships to build better community. He also presented on the value of a Christian education in a program session.

For two days, Ukrainians listened to pastors, members of parliament, cabinet ministers, and foreign guests share and worship, led by praise bands from across Ukraine and the Ukrainian National Symphony and Chorus.

The Association of Ukrainian Protestant Churches and Ukraine's Parliament sponsored the event and invited

Lobb to speak. Churches in Ukraine have been celebrating the Reformation's 500th anniversary all year. The event was inspired from 300,000 people flooding Kiev's main square to commemorate their first national Thanksgiving.

OCU's participation has sparked conversation about how OCU can collaborate with Ukrainian Christians in government, education, ministry, business, and law enforcement to adopt best practices and character formation. Now interest is expressed in partnering with a Ukrainian university for a study abroad program, joint degrees, and opportunities for Ukrainian students to study at OCU.



## DISCOVER SERVICE ABOVE SELF IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

BY PROFESSOR SEAN LOVELL



For most of us, 'criminal justice' evokes images of uniformed men and women policing our communities! The criminal justice system comprises law enforcement, courts, and corrections. OCU's Criminal Justice Program covers these and much more, providing knowledge across the spectrum of criminal justice system operations. It integrates classroom

lecture and discussion with hands-on application of concepts, procedures, and techniques that enables students to experience simulations of performing traffic stops, crisis negotiation, building searches, and processing crime scenes—examples of real-life specialized work situations.

OCU Criminal Justice students experience networking at its best through visits with professionals in a myriad of criminal justice careers, including court officers, corrections personnel, law enforcement officers, forensic experts, and homeland security officers. They visit federal agencies during the annual Washington D.C. Experience trip.

In the Criminal Investigations course, students participate in practical application of crime scene processing for their final examination. They start by learning what it means to investigate crime incidents and move into learning how to do it. They interview and interrogate, write reports, collect and identify evidence, take photographs, learn techniques for searching, and attend a 16-Step Crime Scene processing lecture and practice investigation. Students transform throughout the semester culminating in the Crime Scene Processing Final Exam. If you admire Sherlock Holmes or Inspector Morse, here you become the detective!

Students culminate their studies with an internship at a criminal justice organization. Their capstone course provides an opportunity to synthesize their knowledge of the criminal justice system and integrate their learning to solve a complex problem to prepare for a career in criminal justice.

“God is love,  
and that love  
works through  
men-especially  
through the whole  
community of  
Christians.”

– C.S. Lewis

## FIREWORKS AND CHRISTMAS LIGHTING USHER IN ADVENT SEASON

Ohio Christian University ushered in the Advent season with old traditions and new ones. The evening started with University employees connecting and being encouraged by Rev. David Dean reading the *Christmas Story* to children of faculty and staff present, and with OCU students singing carols.

The joyful celebration moved outdoors for a public gathering with more carol singing at the front of Maxwell Center, followed by a countdown to initiate the Christmas lighting of the campus and an impressive fireworks display timed to start with playing of a prerecorded musical program.

After the light show, those assembled moved into the Maxwell Center cafeteria to enjoy camaraderie heightened with hot chocolate and cookies.

Student Development wrapped up the evening with an “ugly Christmas sweater” contest for students.



# 2017 HOMECOMING & FAMILY DAY WAS ONE TO REMEMBER!

Nearly 500 participants arrived on Ohio Christian University's main campus to celebrate homecoming. The 2017 event was the greatest gathering of alumni, family, and friends ever!

The weather cooperated for this special time to reconnect with favorite professors and staff and to catch up with classmates. While the Homecoming King and Queen roamed lawns and visited with alumni lounging in the shade of the big tree, President Jon Kulaga greeted the attendees, becoming acquainted with many alumni and their families. Buffalo Wild Wings catered lunch, and homemade ice cream quenched the appetite.

Decade reunions provided opportunities to reconnect with classmates. While campus tours showed off the campus' newer buildings and facilities, some alumni stretched their legs on the Josias Rodriguez 5K Glow Run. Kids wore themselves out in the Bounce Houses and played glow-in-the-dark laser tag. Most attendees participated in the alumni-led worship service.

Students participated in a spirit rally with games and face painting followed by the Torch Run Parade, with students running a torch through Circleville with a line of students' cars following. At day's end, many relaxed together, swapping stories around the bonfire!

Junior Kirsten Truex noted, "The Torch Run and bonfire are favorites! They bring the student body together for a memorable experience every year."

2005 graduate Anastasia Beavers declared: "I embraced the sight of alumni from generations past mingling with generations present. It stirred hope and joy for what has been and is to come."

This homecoming enjoyed the largest turnout for any year. Another student added, "I loved it! It brings the alumni community together. Everyone participates. In a world where face-to-face interactions may be few and far between, this homecoming is an easy way to build community."



# FESTIVAL OF CAROLS

PERFORMED IN NEW MINISTRY & PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



Over 950 Christmas celebrants attended Ohio Christian University's 2017 Festival of Carols performed for the first time on December 2 and 3 in the University's new Ministry and Performing Arts Center! The Center is now available for community as well as OCU events.

Produced as a gift to the community, the University Chorale, Chamber Singers, Circleville Community Choral Society, and Festival Orchestra beautifully realized this year's "What Can I Give?" theme. Instead of focusing on what we receive in this Christmas season, Dr. Bennett focused on paying forward with the blessings of Christ.

"Every year, the festival brings a new message, and this year's performance was especially moving. It doesn't matter what you have to give, it matters that you simply give Jesus your heart," one participant explained.

A creative rendering of *A Christmas Carol*, the multimedia drama explored what it means to transcend being Scrooge—selfish, stingy with time, energy, possessions, and love, to become like Christ—the greatest example of giving and unselfish love. With singing, instrumentals, dramatic performances, and narration throughout, the festival elevated the message of giving what you can.

OCU Chamber Winds' prelude featured favorites "Sleigh Ride" and "All Is Calm." The Festival program opened with "Fanfare – Realms of Glory" and a welcome and prayer by Dr. Jon Kulaga, OCU President. The University was excited to welcome in the Advent season with such a celebration.

Highlights included inspired renderings of "E'en So Lord Jesus Quickly Come," "Let Us Be," "In the Bleak Midwinter," and "I'll Give Him My Heart." These were followed by the beloved "O Come All Ye Faithful," "Little Drummer Boy," "Bugler's Holiday," "Glorious Sounds of Christmas," "12 Days After Christmas," "Silent Night, O Holy Night," "Joy to the World," and "What Can I Give Him," concluding with a unique arrangement of the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's Messiah.

Dr. Dione Bennett directed the University Chorale with Cherié Knapp accompanying on piano and Dr. David Bennett as guest conductor.

Featured participants were Cody McClurg, Timothy Carpenter, Gary Dean, Mary Jane Dean, Ian Monaghan, Savanna Harlow, George Edge, Walker Flowers, Dr. Valerie Jones, Bruce Morrison, Dr. John Anthony, Pat Beathard, Donald Glenn, Marty Hayes, Dr. Rebecca Johnson, Dr. Adrienne Lape, Jonathon Satterfield, Dr. Rodney Sones, Linda and Roger Stieg, and Teresa Woerner.

# 400 STUDENTS COMPLETED 40 WORK PROJECTS IN CHURCHES AND CHARITIES

"Church Service Day is certainly one of the greatest service traditions at Ohio Christian University," declares Benny Ferraro, Director of Student Involvement. "Every fall, OCU students assemble into teams to go into our community and live out the University's mission by serving the people, organizations, and churches who spend all their time pouring faith and caring into others."

"As coordinator for Church Service Day, I hear repeatedly how grateful participating churches are for the students' help. Often the teams accomplish work in one morning what normally takes a week or more. Church Service Day is always guaranteed to be a great day!"

From window cleaning in Circleville Presbyterian Church, weeding the rose garden of Williamsport's United Methodist Church, to filling pallets with boxes of reading glasses destined for missions worldwide for Restoring Vision, the teams produce visible improvements: sparkling glass windows and doors, trimmed walkways, brushed carpets, and tidy yards. They receive many 'Thank Yous' and 'Bless Yous' from worksite overseers. Returning to campus, they enjoyed a hearty lunch and sunny afternoon of outdoor games and camaraderie.

Circleville residents Martha Jo Meadows and husband Paul have been inviting students to help them for years. They live near Dee Conley, wife of former OCU president John Conley, who introduced them to OCU's Service Days. "I've had heart surgeries, and Paul had knee replacements. It is a great help the students provide in the spring and fall and very much appreciated. They clean the flowerbeds around the house and wash the exterior windowpanes and porch. OCU students are wonderful and fun to be around. Service Days are a blessing for us."





## RECOGNIZED FOR NAIA CHAMPIONS OF CHARACTER™ AWARD!

On October 17 at OCU's fall dinner, Trailblazer athletes were recognized for their contributions in helping OCU score a NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics) Five-star Gold Level Award for the 2016-17 school year based on their pursuit of character-driven athletics.

OCU stands with the fourteen Champions of Character winners to receive a perfect 100 score. These top winners were selected from 183 member institutions named Five-Star Award winners.

According to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, "Institutions are measured on a demonstrated commitment to Champions of Character and earned points in character training, conduct in competition, academic focus, character recognition and character promotion. They earned points based on exceptional student-athlete grade point averages and by having minimal to no ejections during competition throughout the course of the academic year."



PRESIDENT KULAGA HELPS CONGRATULATE OUR SPRING STUDENT ATHLETES FOR THEIR WORK ON AND OFF THE FIELD IN 2017 AT THE ANNUAL NIGHT OF CHAMPIONS

## YOUNG CROWNED NAIA ALL-AMERICAN

The Ohio Christian University Cross Country team achieved a goal this season, a goal they had been pursuing for six years. The time had finally arrived to participate in the program's first ever NAIA Championship race. Highlighted by some of the best teams and runners in the nation, the competition guaranteed quality competition for OCU as they looked to make a name for themselves within the NAIA.

The day began with the men's 8,000-meter race. The Trailblazers were led by Kyle Benecke, who finished with a time of 26:27 to finish in 97th place. Canaan Gardner came in less than a minute later to finish in 130th place with a time of 26:46.

Following the conclusion of the men's race, the women took to the track. The highlight of the day was Ariel Young's 5,000 meter time of 17:55, which put her in 15th place overall and award her the title of NAIA All-American.

"Both the men and women capped off a great season with their best team performances of the year," said Head Coach Eric Hamner. "The way these student-athletes worked all season long, believing in the process, has been wonderful. The work paid off as they ran better and better every week culminating with a great RSC (River States Conference) and NAIA performance. We have seen their faith grow as well as God's faithfulness. I am extremely proud to be their coach."

For more on the Trailblazer Cross Country program and the rest of OCU Athletics, follow us on,

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“God may not guide us in an obvious way because he wants us to make decisions based on faith and character.”

– Dallas Willard



## ALUMNI IN WORSHIP LEADERSHIP

In 2014, Matt and Megan Harshbarger graduated from OCU in Worship Leadership. Today they serve at Cornerstone Church in Akron, Ohio. Matt is Worship and Production Arts Director, and Megan is Worship and Creative Arts Director. Megan produces services and special events, co-leading worship teams at Cornerstone’s Mogadore and Portage Lakes campuses. Matt guides worship and production teams for weekend services and special events.

They support Senior Pastor Brenda Young and Mogadore Campus Lead Pastor Gordon Hayberg, also OCU graduates. Cornerstone’s mission is “to help people find the Father, a family, and a fulfilling future.” Focus is on passing this faith on and applying these values: 1) be servant leaders, 2) treat others as we would like to be treated, 3) be blessed to be a blessing, and 4) value innovation and creativity.

For Matt, “OCU prepared me for worship ministry. I improved my musical skills and received a solid biblical background. Opportunities to learn leading worship were invaluable.”

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**“I learned to lead worship. My internship in a church was a game-changer. Preparing in an established church is an experience I would never trade.”**

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What was best about OCU’s worship program are professors who give students the best possible education: “They go above and beyond to help. They are knowledgeable and experienced, and pass on their experience in helpful ways. If it wasn’t for them, my college experience would have been for nothing.”

Megan feels the same: “I was given an opportunity to mentor and lead small groups. I led worship in chapel, on the Ablaze team, and in revival. I interned in Georgia at Rock Springs Church. Such opportunities provided the groundwork for my work. OCU offers students with passion, drive, and vision, opportunities for leadership and challenges us to succeed.”

“I would never have imagined that I would be leading with such an incredible team. God is enabling us to grow at Cornerstone, and without OCU we would not be here,” Megan explains. “At OCU my faith was shaped through small group ministries and community development. I value my OCU small groups and mentoring relationships as the strongest avenue of growth in my life and walk with Christ.”

# MBA GRADUATE JORDANNA WILLIAMS CREDITS OCU MORROW

"I started at OCU in December 2015, just four months after I had my first child. Initially, I was nearly overcome with anxiety, feeling at once that I needed to be an example for my child and also dealing with the fear of potential failure. I believe subconsciously, when I began the journey to pursue my graduate degree, it was a litmus test of what kind of parent I would be. Little did I know that what I would learn along the way would be much more than a testament to my perseverance. My learning would be proof that if a person is given the tools and environment in which to succeed, then there are no limits on what a determined, persevering person can achieve."

"To begin at the beginning: OCU was not my first attempt to earn an MBA. I had for a very brief time enrolled in a university in South Florida, prior to getting married to my husband and having my son. My sole responsibility then was pursuing a full-time career in telecommunications. I attended class for two weeks before withdrawing. I just was overwhelmed. There was no support from professors or that school's student resource center. Needless to say, upon enrolling at OCU, I feared that I would have the same outcome.

"Thankfully, I could not have been more wrong. In my first OCU class, my first assignment was to write a devotional about how I prayed that God carry me through to the finish line and give me the strength to overcome any obstacles in my way. This was so refreshing to me. In that moment, I knew that OCU was different. I knew that OCU was for me. I felt supported and encouraged every step along the way. I dealt with the challenges of being a new mom, starting a new career, and managing a personal life—all while excelling as a graduate student and maintaining a 3.5 GPA.

"The knowledge and skill set that I acquired at OCU has been a tremendous help to me in my new role as a revenue analyst for Delta Air Lines. I have leaned on the lessons I learned in my various classes so much that it is obvious God makes no mistakes. My embarking on the journey to achieve my MBA when I did was a part of His plan for me to further my career.

"The MBA program at OCU is designed to give you great insight into the fundamentals of business and real-world situations. I know I am a better employee due to the knowledge I acquired through OCU, and I know I am a better person for proving to myself I could cross the finish line. I will forever be grateful to OCU for truly making this journey a life-changing experience."



## TRIBUTE TO OCU GRADUATE STAN TOLER

BY DOUG CARTER, OCU PRESIDENT 1980-1989

A Celebration of the Life of Stan Toler was held in December, 2017, at Bethany First Church of the Nazarene in Bethany, OK. Stan, an OCU alumnus, founded the Stan Toler Institute at OCU. Everyone who knew Stan loved him and admired his attitude. His generosity and humility connected with thousands of people. He always served others. Servant-hood and personal integrity—yes, Christ-likeness—marked his life.

Stan served the Church of the Nazarene, Church of Christ in Christian Union, Wesleyan Church, Free Methodist, Salvation Army, Church of God Anderson,

Church of God Cleveland, Pentecostal Holiness, Free Will Baptist, and Congregational Methodist. World Gospel Mission and Church of the Nazarene sent Stan worldwide to serve missionaries, pastors, and churches. His influence is a legacy for generations.

Stan was a giant of faith who impacted thousands. Thousands celebrated his life and ministry. Heaven rejoices! I love you, Stan. You are the best friend I ever had. Stan's step-dad says it best: "Everybody needs a Stan Toler in their life."

ETHAN ALLEN '15 & DUSTIN HUBE '15

# SERVE WHERE DISASTER STRIKES

BY AMBER GINTER, INTEGRATED LANGUAGE ARTS/ENGLISH FOR AYA  
(ADOLESCENT TO YOUNG ADULT) EDUCATION '19

Devastation from natural disasters has piled on! Hurricanes alone accounted for billions of dollars of loss. Tragedy of losing loved ones and possessions is beyond measure. After these calamities, two OCU graduates worked diligently to serve those most affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

Ethan Allen, '15, worked with The Salvation Army in Ft. Myers, Florida, assisting with cleanup after Hurricane Irma. As Safety Officer for the Ft. Myers District, he maintained volunteer health and well-being awareness and monitored food standards and facility awareness.

Ethan mastered this work quickly due to his EM studies and prior volunteer work. "To see so many volunteers involved reminded me there is hope in knowing you aren't alone. Others are with you in these difficult moments. Coming from a faith-based school, I know faith in Jesus will support us through tribulations. He is cause for hope."

Ethan appreciates professors who introduced him to Emergency and Disaster Management. Called also to ministry, Ethan learned how to relate EM skills to ministry. Without OCU, Ethan would not be where he is: "OCU instilled hope, and without it, we are not prepared to serve those suffering disastrous conditions."

Dustin Hube, '15, is accustomed to alleviating devastation too. Dustin has helped in several disasters. While at OCU, he traveled to Haiti to distribute supplies and rebuild after the 2010 earthquake. After Hurricane Irene in 2011, he went to New York to clean up and rebuild and to Staten Island after Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

Dustin explains, "Because I have applied what I learned, I really understand emergency management. Professor Hicks introduced me to Pickaway County Emergency Management Agency which opened the door to an internship and employment. Today I am a manager at Mt. Carmel Hospital System in Columbus, Ohio."



SAM BUSSEY '17

# SERVES IN HOUSTON

BY AMBER GINTER, INTEGRATED LANGUAGE ARTS/ENGLISH FOR AYA  
(ADOLESCENT TO YOUNG ADULT) EDUCATION '19

When Samantha "Sam" Bussey graduated in 2017 she never imagined majoring in Emergency and Disaster Management would lead her to life-changing recovery work caused by Hurricane Harvey.

With Encompass World Partners—a faith-based organization that sends missionaries worldwide in crisis response—Sam traveled to Houston, Texas, to help restore the Harvey-ravaged community. Sam worked to deploy teams to aid victims.

Of applying her learning, she says "My emergency management classes taught me how to respond to a crisis. I know what to look for when disaster strikes, how to respond and organize going into disaster areas. Being prepared for field work is key. Some things you learn

through experience. Classes and hands-on experience enabled me to be effective in Houston."

"I learned short-term help is not as effective as long-term help. Focusing on involving people from surrounding areas is best practice. Local people know neighbors, culture, and needs better than outsiders." Being hopeful, Sam is inspired by helping others: "Staff and volunteers pull together, uniting as a body in Christ, giving energy and time to aid the needy."

"I am excited to learn where God leads me next. With Encompass as a steppingstone, I hope to minister to refugees. Without my OCU internship and connecting to Encompass, I would not have learned of amazing opportunities to go overseas."

If you are an Alum and would like to submit a story or life updates, please contact:  
Justin Dishong Director of Alumni Relations | [jdishong@ohiochristian.edu](mailto:jdishong@ohiochristian.edu) | 740-497-4856



# CREATING A CULTURE OF FAITH BRINGS HOPE TO BROKEN PEOPLE

BY TIM TABOR, BA IN CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES '84



In 2009, my wife Beth and I began a Sunday evening Bible study for our three teenage children that turned into a recurring event they called “home church.”

Home church was a safe place to have a meal, explore the possibility of faith in God, and learn to trust a Christian. Transitioning people from home church to an established church became a challenge for Beth and me, and, with the support of our church, Grace Ministries, we began planting a new church in 2010.

In 2011, we began to take into our home people struggling with addictions. In 2012, we opened our first Men’s Ministry House and continued to take young women into our home. In February of 2013, we rented a house for men suffering from opiate addiction and began a full-time recovery program, called C.O.M.O. (Compassion Outreach Ministries of Ohio) Recovery.

C.O.M.O. Recovery is a long-term, faith-based recovery program offering an 18-month program of healing and discipleship for people struggling with addiction and for those hopeless in spirit. All we ask of prospective participants is a sincere willingness to change. The goal of the program is to foster growth into wholeness and health through faith.

**“The question most Christians need to answer when they serve is: ‘Can you give with no expectation of return?’”**

In March of 2013, Beth and I, with help from Churches of Christ in Christian Union, purchased the old Como United Methodist Church on Como Avenue in Columbus, Ohio, and began to restore it.

“We quickly discovered that the old church building was a good place for the people in our recovery program to learn basic work skills,” explains Beth. “So, in 2014 we established non-profit company that applied those skills to support the recovery program.”

Running out of space to house women in 2015, we rented another house, inviting our daughter and son-in-law, Taylor and Keith Prusinski, to join the staff, and with them, we opened Women’s Intermediate House.

In 2016, we expanded oversight to Inner City Ministries, a mission in Franklinton, an inner-city area of Columbus, adding daughter Taylor Prusinski (OCU BA in Disaster Management ‘14) to C.O.M.O. Recovery’s staff as Program and Outreach Director, and they purchased another house for women. In fall of 2016, Compassion Outreach Ministries of Ohio received its official non-profit status.

From Taylor’s perspective, a degree in Disaster Management and her OCU education changed her life. After serving on annual mission work teams throughout her youth, Taylor decided to be a missionary. Her dream was to leave the United States and share Christ through holistic care around the world. Through her OCU experience, God pointed her in a different direction.

After graduation, Taylor worked for several companies and eventually we offered her a career with C.O.M.O. Work at C.O.M.O. comes with much chaos, but the heart of her work is sharing Christ through holistic care. God was calling Taylor to be a missionary in the United States. Education in management, crisis response, and recovery equipped Taylor to help the community in the inner city of Columbus, bring organization and

management skills to a small non-profit, and fulfill her calling to share Christ through caring for others.

**“OCU provided a true Biblical understanding of what a life of service means. That foundation established a framework for engaging the culture through compassionate ministries.”**

To re-envision its mission, C.O.M.O.’s staff began to restore the facilities from the ground up with the help of residents in the recovery program and work teams. Columbus’ Franklinton area suffers from multi-generation poverty, substance addiction, and sex workers. Providing ministries that address these issues is the focus of our effort to achieve radical change.

How does the church respond to the overwhelming social crisis that we face in poverty, human trafficking and addiction? For our Church on Como and in Compassion Outreach Ministries of Ohio, we are creating a culture of faith by immersing ourselves in a community of love that brings a voice of hope to broken people.



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