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23

# INTERN YEARBOOK

ABIDING PRESENCE  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

[AbidingPresence.net](http://AbidingPresence.net)

# Abiding Presence CAMPUS MINISTRY

## INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Abiding Presence college-age internship program has four key pillars: faith formation, vocational discernment, relationship building and leadership development. In the mornings, this looks like participating in daily devotions, learning how to pray with and for one another and studying scripture. We invite members of the congregation to share about their faith and how it connects to the work they do in the world. Then, in the afternoons, interns are in leadership positions as they help to run our six-week summer day camp ministry.

*Abiding Together*, the college-age internship program is an important way our church is living out Jesus' command to "make disciples."



We believe college-age young adults are in a season where they are making big decisions about what they want their lives, the world and the church to look like. Through this internship program, faith becomes a lens through which our young adults look to make these decisions. As their church community, we equip them with knowledge, relationships and experiences that will guide them into the future to which God is calling them.

Each day of the internship begins with Morning Prayer, where we pray this prayer that sums up our hopes, dreams and prayers for our college-age young adults:

*O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

May the stories of our summer interns give you good courage and remind all of us that God's hand is leading us and God's love is supporting us – always.

Blessings,  
Pastor Keseley & Pastor Kresse  
Pastors of Abiding Presence

## PEYTON DAVIS

Peyton Davis has been a long-time member of Abiding Presence. Before the internship program, however, Peyton says she didn't feel as involved in church as she does now.

"My family was always involved, but I didn't feel personally involved until the internship program started," Peyton said.

Peyton said that the relationships she formed through the internship program are what made her feel more connected to the church. She said the friends that she's made here are one of her favorite parts of the experience overall.

"This program made me realize that church is more than just a location that people go to on Sundays. It's a community of like-minded individuals."

This summer, Peyton is working on marketing and social media for both Abiding Presence and ECHO. Peyton said she really values the opportunity to have work related to her career field. For example, Peyton is working with members of the congregation who own a marketing firm in order to learn and gain valuable experience in the field.

"The one thing that's really special about working at this church is that they want to cater to what you are doing with your life so that you get experience in your field," Peyton said. "We're all doing something that benefits each of us individually."

Peyton also stated that she really values the leadership opportunities given to the Abiding Presence college-age interns.

"The environment we work in makes everyone feel as though they can bring forth ideas and allows anyone to be a leader," Peyton said.



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*WORKING SUMMER CAMP  
HAS BEEN HELPING ME  
UNDERSTAND WHAT MY FAITH  
CALLING COULD BE DOWN  
THE ROAD.*



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## ETHAN DUKE

"I hadn't enjoyed church before."

Ethan Duke and his family are newer members of Abiding Presence. Ethan's first experience at the church was being a shepherd in the outdoor live nativity with his family on Christmas Eve 2021. Then, in the summer of 2022, Ethan began his first season as a college-age intern.

"I was supposed to be working in landscaping, and then I broke my foot," Ethan shared. "I worked summer camp instead and now I've loved it for the last two years."

Ethan is passionate about working at summer camp and engaging with children. This summer, he has helped to lead the games station and music during opening and closing.

"It's been a great time leading music," Ethan shared. "I feel like the kids have really responded to it and it's been great."

For Ethan, this experience has taught him a lot both about his career goals as well as his future in the church.

"Working summer camp has been helping me understand what my faith calling could be down the road," Ethan shared. "I've been considering maybe being a Sunday school teacher in the future."

Seeing the impact on the kids has been the most meaningful part of this experience for Ethan.

"Especially singing the hippo song three times in a row," Ethan said. "I mean, that's as good as it gets."

This fall, Ethan will be a junior Data Science major at the University of Michigan with a minor in Music.

## MADDIE DUKE

"My faith got a lot stronger through this program."

For Maddie Duke, it's her first summer working as a college-age intern, but she's already learned a lot about scripture and her own faith.

"I didn't really sit down and crack open the Bible before this internship, but now we do that every day."

Maddie's family is relatively new to Abiding Presence; Maddie and her family first got involved in December 2021. In the beginning, Maddie was only involved in the music ministry and didn't know many people at church.

"I didn't know anybody else my age," Maddie said. "Through lunches and faith formation, though, I've gotten to know the other interns and make more friends which is really cool."

"Before, when I had volunteer work or other jobs where I worked with kids, sometimes I would get stressed when I was working, but this program is so organized and it runs so smoothly," Maddie said. "It really allows us to actually work with the kids."

In the fall, Maddie is going to be attending Penn State University as a secondary education major with a concentration in math. Maddie will be staying at Penn State for a fifth year to earn her Master's in special education to become a high school special education teacher.

"Inclusivity is something I want to prioritize in my teaching," Maddie said. "The program here shows that it's not that hard to do a few extra things to make a kid more comfortable and more successful."



*I DIDN'T REALLY SIT DOWN  
AND CRACK OPEN THE BIBLE  
BEFORE THIS INTERNSHIP,  
BUT NOW WE DO THAT  
EVERY DAY.*





## EMMA GLASS

"This church is my second family."

Emma Glass has been a member of Abiding Presence since she was a kid, but the internship program has helped her grow close to the church in her own unique way.

"I came here because my parents came here, but I have grown to love this church on my own," Emma said. "When Pastor Meredith came in 2010, that's when I really started to put a spotlight on my faith because I loved her sermons."

During her time working at Abiding Presence over the last four summers, Emma has done all sorts of jobs.

"According to Pastor Meredith, I'm a fixer," Emma said. "I like to go above and beyond and make sure whatever I give is the best because she gives us the best."

Emma has helped to manage the church office, deliver checks to the bank, and plan intern events. In particular, Emma has helped to manage and lead the other interns.

"Even though I didn't feel like much of a leader because these are my peers, I feel my leadership skills have really grown."

Emma said she loves the internship program because it is such a supportive and welcoming environment to help strengthen her faith journey more.

"The church always supports me and always asks me how I'm doing and what I'm up to," Emma said. "Most of all, Pastor Meredith has been my number one supporter. I give her so much credit for allowing my population of college-age kids to still have relationship with their faith because that's very hard to do, and I am grateful for that chance."



*THE CHURCH  
ALWAYS  
SUPPORTS ME  
AND ALWAYS  
ASKS ME HOW I'M  
DOING AND WHAT  
I'M UP TO.*

## GRACE HANRAHAN

Grace Hanrahan loves being a summer camp counselor at Abiding Presence. Grace has been a member of Abiding Presence for several years now and her faith has experienced quite the evolution over the years.

“I’ve always struggled with my faith and coming to terms with being a Christian,” Grace shared. “I know there are some people who abuse the word of God and take it too literally. I didn’t want to be associated with that.”

Since starting with the internship program, Grace has found herself more comfortable and confident in her faith. She says devotions have really helped her find her footing and develop her own perspective on scripture.

“It’s up to my own personal interpretation, and I don’t have to see it the way other people do,” Grace said. “I can choose to see the more positive message.”

Grace named working with the kids as being one of the highlights of the summer internship experience.

“Some kids are so eager to learn and I am pleasantly surprised,” Grace said. “It feels like all of your hard work really pays off. It makes me really happy that they’re having fun.”

This fall, Grace will be starting at George Mason University as a junior transfer student studying Criminology, Law, and Society. Her plans for post-graduation are to pursue an accelerated Master’s degree in her major.



*I’VE ALWAYS STRUGGLED  
WITH MY FAITH AND COMING  
TO TERMS WITH BEING A  
CHRISTIAN.*





*WITH DOING MORNING DEVOTIONS AND FAITH FORMATION, I FEEL CLOSER TO PEOPLE HERE BECAUSE I CAN SEE GOD WORKING THROUGH THEIR LIVES AND MY OWN LIFE.*



## SARAH HOLT

Sarah Holt has always loved Abiding Presence. Sarah has been an active member here since fifth grade and has always enjoyed being a part of this vibrant community.

“I loved coming to Sunday school, I would beg my parents to take me because I loved the people,” Sarah shared. “I just liked being physically in the church with the people here. But faith wasn’t a huge part of it.”

For Sarah, the church was a place where she made friends and built relationships, but not necessarily a place for her to strengthen her faith.

After COVID something changed. After graduating high school in 2021, Sarah became a college-age intern for the summer. Sarah cites devotions as one of the most formative parts of this experience over the past few summers.

“With doing morning devotions and faith formation, I feel closer to people here because I can see God working through their lives and my own life,” Sarah shared. “When something bad or even good happens to each of us, we want to celebrate with those people or help them grieve.”

Even during the year when Sarah is away at school, she says she still feels deeply connected to her community here.

“Even when I’m not physically at this church, I’m still very connected,” Sarah said. “The faith never has to go away just because we’re not here.”

This fall, Sarah will be a junior at the University of Mary Washington studying International Relations and minoring in German.



# ELIZABETH HORAN

If you had asked Elizabeth Horan a few years ago how she would be spending her summers as a college student, she would not have expected to be working as a summer camp counselor at a Lutheran church.

Growing up, Elizabeth and her family attended a local church in Northern Virginia. Elizabeth was a devoted and active member; she participated in the church choir, went on mission trips, and volunteered with their hypothermia prevention campaigns. When she went to college, Elizabeth became less involved.

"When college and COVID hit, I really didn't like virtual church," Elizabeth shared. "My faith journey was kind of paused."

After her first year of college, one of her best friends from high school, Laurel Echard, invited Elizabeth to come work at Abiding Presence. Last summer, Elizabeth worked as a food pantry intern.

Elizabeth said that working at Abiding Presence and participating in daily devotions "reopened" her faith journey.

"Devotions are a really special part of my day," Elizabeth shared. "It's one of the best ways to start the day at this job because it's a moment where we all get to reflect and thank God in our own way."

In addition to strengthening her faith, Elizabeth has learned a lot her future career in marketing. Last summer, Elizabeth helped create content for the church's social media and the food pantry.

"I've learned that it's super important to know who your audience is," Elizabeth said. "You can create content to your own style but if it's not tailored to your audience it won't have an impact."

Overall, Elizabeth is thankful for her experience working at Abiding Presence and feels that she has found a new church home.

"I'm most thankful for the community," Elizabeth shared. "I was really lost in my faith journey and this experience has strengthened it."

This fall, Elizabeth will be a junior Marketing major at James Madison University with a minor in Sports Communication. After college, she hopes to have a career in social media content creation for a sports team.



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TO NOT KEEP COMING BACK.*



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## OLIVER IGNAZZITTO

"I feel like I can completely be myself."

Oliver Ignazzitto has been a member of Abiding Presence for seven years and has participated in the Abiding Presence summer internship program in 2020, 2021, and 2023.

Oliver said that one of the best parts of working at Abiding Presence is learning with others during devotions.

"I didn't do confirmation here, I did it at a different church that had different beliefs," Oliver said. "I think the norm here is a lot more coherent, and I've learned a lot."

Oliver will graduate from Carroll University in Wisconsin this upcoming winter. After graduation, he plans to pursue a master's degree program in Counseling. Oliver said that the internship program has helped him learn about what he wants to do in the future.

"I had not been considering going into counseling with children but now I am," Oliver said. "I get along with kids naturally, and I've realized now that perhaps there is a real skill there."

Oliver said his favorite part of working at Abiding Presence is hanging out with the other interns.

"I'm enjoying seeing people that I haven't had the chance to see in a while since high school," Oliver said. "I just didn't see a reason to not keep coming back."

# SCOTT JENSEN

"Music is a very important part of my life."

Scott has been a member of Abiding Presence since he was young and has been active through confirmation and the music ministry. This fall, Scott will be attending NOVA in pursuit of an associate's degree in Computer Science.

Although he had faith before starting with the internship program, Scott said he didn't feel as connected to the church community as he got older. Like many people, Scott felt disconnected from his community during the throes of the pandemic. "I was kind of isolated," Scott said.

Since the world has reopened for in-person activities and worship, Scott has returned to the church community through the music ministry, and eventually, the internship program.

"Being able to do music and sing with the church is what brought me back every week," Scott shared. "This has been helping me to put myself back out in the world and reconnect with others."

After being reconnected with the music ministry, Scott started getting involved with the church once more and began working at summer camp through the college-age internship program. In particular, Scott is on the music team and helps to lead songs during opening and closing every day at camp.

While working at Abiding Presence, Scott has learned about what he wants to do for his future career.

"I was connected with a member here who is in the computer science field and he urged me to start looking at a specialty within the field," Scott shared. "I've learned I don't want to be in IT, but I do like working with sounds and music."

Scott credits the work he does at camp as having helped lead him in the right direction in his career. "Having experience with doing music in different settings and leading music in different settings has been helpful."



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*I WANT TO MAKE LIFE BETTER FOR PEOPLE WHO DON'T HAVE SOMETHING LIKE THIS FAITH COMMUNITY.*

## ORION KLASSEN

"This experience has taught me many good life skills in ways that other internships with much more 'hard skills' just can't."

This summer, "Captain" Orion Klassen is working as the Assistant Director of summer camp. Orion says this leadership experience has taught her a lot about what she wants for her future career.

"It's really hammered in the idea that I want to have a career that's focused around serving my community with others."

In the fall, Orion will be a junior Sociology major at Bryn Mawr College. Orion plans to pursue a career in social work. After college, Orion is planning on attending a Master's degree program in Social Work in order to become a counselor.

"I want to make life better for people who don't have something like this faith community."

As the summer camp Assistant Director, Orion says she has learned a lot of valuable leadership and organizational skills.

"Summer camp has not been an easy journey, but definitely really rewarding!" Orion said. "I've learned how to quickly problem solve and with a lot of patience to achieve good outcomes."

Beyond her future aspirations, Orion says that the internship program has strengthened her connection to her church community.

"It literally has forced me to get to know a lot more people," Orion said. "A lot of people who I would not have interacted with before now know who I am. They will just walk up to me and ask me questions about how I am or what I'm up to."

"The friends you make here - you really do find pretty awesome people."



## ELLA LADNER

After graduating from Woodbridge High School in June 2023, Ella Ladner began her first summer as an Abiding Presence college-age intern. According to Ella, this experience has helped her find joy in attending church after viewing it as something mandatory for a long time.

“It seemed more like a task than something I enjoyed doing,” Ella shared. “After I started building connections with other people my age, I began to witness the true impact that God was having on our everyday lives.”

“The experience at AP helped me rekindle my faith and deepened my relationship with the church,” Ella said.

In particular, Ella said that devotions every morning have had a huge impact on her faith journey.

“The daily devotions during the program made me appreciate that dedicated time for God in my day,” Ella shared. “This newfound appreciation led me to incorporate these moments outside of the church as well, making it an important aspect of my life throughout the school year.”

This summer, Ella has worked on several different weeks of camp including the Amazing Race camp. In addition, Ella has worked as both a cabin leader as well as a science and art workshop leader. During the school year, she has led a variety of Sunday School workshop stations, including jump rope and service.

This fall, Ella will be attending Louisiana State University as a freshman studying Psychology with a concentration in Neuroscience.

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*FOR ME, ABIDING PRESENCE IS MY LIGHTHOUSE IN A WORLD THAT CAN OFTEN FEEL DESOLATE.*



## ERIKA MAASEIDE

Over winter break of my sophomore year of college, I read on social media that a friend of a friend was in the hospital. Her sister had invaded her home and attacked her and her own father, and the father died. The girl I knew was in critical condition. Suddenly, I felt reminded of every terrible thing that has ever happened in the world. I felt like I was drowning in a sea of bad things, never to surface.

I came to church the next morning, and it was like seeing the sun again. I knew I could ask Pastor or my friends to pray for her, but even more than that, I was reminded that I had a whole community of people who will always have my back. Being here reminds me that the world is not a dark and dreadful place. For me, Abiding Presence is my lighthouse in a world that can often feel desolate.

I started working for the Abiding Presence internship program during its inaugural summer in 2020. For the past three summers, I have worked for the Food Ministry as the senior food ministry intern. My time at the food pantry taught me so much. More than anything, I'm grateful for the relationships I made through that work. I've been able to connect and talk with so many of our adult members of the church who I may have never known otherwise.

This summer, I've had the privilege of being our first-ever "writing" intern. My main project has been working with Pastor Meredith to write a book about our internship program and how other churches can replicate it. In addition to this, I have been writing profiles on all of the college-age interns. One of my favorite parts of this summer has been writing these profiles; I have loved not only hearing my peers' stories but also being able to tell them.

I am so grateful to the Abiding Presence internship program for giving me and my peers a safe space to gain meaningful work experience and build relationships. Working here has been my favorite part of each of my summers since graduating high school.

# Abiding Presence CAMPUS MINISTRY

## RYAN MCGOWAN

“Captain-Pastor” (as his fellow interns like to call him) Ryan McGowan is working as the Curriculum Director of summer camp this summer. Ryan first began working at Abiding Presence last year and was connected to the church community through his friend Ally.

“I came in last summer and was very unsure if I wanted to be a teacher because a lot of people in my program were starting to drop out,” Ryan shared. “It seemed like a very intimidating profession to get into.”

Through working at the summer internship program, Ryan has felt reaffirmed in his passion for teaching. As Curriculum Director, Ryan gets to put what he is learning in school as an education major directly to use through his work with the kids at camp.

“Over winter break, I helped Michaela with a lesson for Sunday School, and she was impressed and wanted me to help write the curriculum for the summer,” Ryan said. “It was a nice change and it was something that I had been studying in school.”

Ryan credits this experience of writing curriculum and leading camp as the most valuable thing he has learned this summer.

“This has been a really valuable experience where I learned a lot about myself and became confident in what I want to do,” Ryan shared. “I’ve realized that I do want to teach and summer camp has reinforced that this is something I want to keep doing.”

This fall, Ryan will be graduating from James Madison University and will then begin his Masters in Education program with a projected graduation date of May 2024. After graduating, Ryan plans to become a middle school history teacher.

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*BEING AT THIS CHURCH HAS HELPED ME RECONNECT IN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. I HAVE A BIT MORE OF AN UNDERSTANDING OF HOW I WANT TO LEAD MY LIFE WITH GOD IN IT.*



## MARIAN MELENDRES

Before she started coming to Abiding Presence this past fall, Marian was without a church home. Marian worshiped with her family in her living room, but did not have a larger community to share in faith with.

"I've had a bumpy road with my faith," Marian shared. "I had been struggling in terms of my relationship with God."

In August of 2022, however, Marian Googled in search of a place where she could volunteer and gain experience working with marginalized populations for her social work degree. Through this search, she found the Abiding Presence Food Ministry.

"Sharon connected me to the church through my volunteering with the food pantry back in August," Marian said. "Through her, I was able to learn more about the church and the internship."

This summer, Marian is working as a summer camp counselor and has been enjoying being a part of a church community. Overall, through finding the food ministry and the internship program, Marian says she has felt more connected to her faith than ever before.

"Being at this church has helped me reconnect in my relationship with God," Marian shared. "I have a bit more of an understanding of how I want to lead my life with God in it."

Marian is an incoming senior at George Mason University who plans to go on to graduate school for an accelerated master's in Social Work program. After graduation, Marian plans to pursue a career as a therapist.



# ELLA PADGETT

"My faith just kept growing since I started coming here."

This is Ella Padgett's second summer at Abiding Presence as a college-age intern. Last summer, Ella worked on the food pantry team. This summer, Ella came back to join the summer camp team.

"I want to work with children, but I've never done summer camp before, so this will be a new experience for me!" Ella said.

Ella is studying Developmental Psychology and Digital Art at Liberty University as a rising sophomore this fall. After college, Ella plans to pursue a master's in social work to become a child psychologist.

One of Ella's favorite parts of the internship program is devotions each morning.

"When I started at Liberty I was really nervous because I was going to a school where a lot of people grew up reading the Bible and I didn't do that as much," Ella said. "Talking to the Pastors and the other interns gave me confidence in actually talking about and interpreting scripture."

Beyond devotions, Ella also stated that she has made many new friends since starting the internship program last summer.

"I've made some great friends here, everyone was so welcoming and funny," Ella said. "I just can't stop laughing."

"Coming here has been great for getting experience, but also for making good friends and walking through my faith."



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AND THE OTHER INTERNS  
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ACTUALLY TALKING ABOUT  
AND INTERPRETING  
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*I LIKED GETTING AN IDEA OF  
WHAT DIFFERENT WORK  
ENVIRONMENTS CAN  
LOOK LIKE.*



## ARABELLA PAETH

This is Arabella Paeth's first summer as an Abiding Presence college-age intern after graduating from high school in June.

Before this internship experience, Arabella says they have not been as engaged in the church. "Sometimes I would tune in to the live-stream services," Arabella shared. They also said they enjoyed coming to youth group in high school.

This summer, Arabella has been working in a variety of roles to help support summer camp and the church as a whole. In particular, they have worked with the food pantry, camp set up, children's worship bag prep and served as a workshop leader at the art station during preschool camp.

Arabella said participating in faith formation every week has been a formative experience. "I liked getting an idea of what different work environments can look like," Arabella said.

"I've really appreciated being in the church in person a little bit more," Arabella shared. "I'm thankful for the chance to have something to do over the summer."

## NATALIE POINTS

Welcoming, inviting, and nonjudgmental – “This is what the church should be.”

For Natalie Points, Abiding Presence is her new church home. She grew up attending a local Methodist church, where she was baptized and sang in church choir. Since high school, however, Natalie has been less active.

“Abiding Presence really changed my perspective on the church,” Natalie said. “It was immediately so different from what I was used to.”

Natalie found the Abiding Presence college-age internship program through her roommate Peyton Davis, who has been a longtime member of Abiding Presence. Although Natalie is new to Abiding Presence, she said she can definitely see herself staying involved in the future.

“This program has brought me closer to my faith for sure.”

This summer Natalie is working on the summer camp team, with a focus on supporting our exceptional needs campers. Natalie is able to work one-on-one with campers while also providing training and coaching to the rest of the staff team to give campers the best possible experience. Her work at camp ties into her minor in Exceptional Education.

“I think it’s cool that I get to work with children on the spectrum and children with special needs. It ties into my future and my minor!” Natalie said.

Natalie Points is an incoming senior at James Madison University. She is studying Communication Sciences and Disorders and plans to go to graduate school to study speech-language pathology with the goal to become a speech pathologist in a hospital setting.

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## ANNIKA SEIFART

Annika has moved many times around the country and around the world, but she says she has never found a church home quite like Abiding Presence.

Annika has always been connected to her faith in some form. “My grandpa was a pastor,” Annika shared. “So I grew up going to church every Sunday with my parents.”

In their many moves, Annika said her family went through periods where they didn’t go to church at all.

“During the six years that we lived in Germany we didn’t go to church because we didn’t like the military-style church,” Annika shared.

When her family moved to Northern Virginia, they found Abiding Presence and immediately Annika says she felt at home here. Annika became involved with the youth ministry, and then over the past three summers, Annika has worked as an intern with the college-age internship program.

“When I was in high school, I didn’t participate as much as I wish I did,” Annika shared. “Now that I work here, my faith has been strengthened a lot.”

Annika says she really appreciates working with peers who share her values.

“We could be working anywhere else, but we all decided to work here,” Annika said. “They’ve been a huge influence on me because they are the nicest people ever.”

Annika Seifart will be a junior Biology major this fall at Lander University in Greenwood, South Carolina. After graduation, she hopes to go on to graduate school to become a physical therapist.

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## SOFIE SEIFART

This fall, Sofie Seifart will be headed to Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, Florida as a freshman to study Biology. She will also be running Division I cross country and track at school. After graduation, she hopes to go to graduate school for veterinary science.

This is Sofie's first summer working as an Abiding Presence college-age intern after graduating from Robinson Secondary School in June.

Sofie loves working as a summer camp counselor and interacting with kids. This summer she has worked both as a science workshop leader and a cabin leader.

"Camp made an impact on my relationship with church because of the friends and relationships I've made," Sofie shared. "I love being able to see the smiles and joy on the little kids' faces."

In particular, Sofie loves working at Abiding Presence with her older sister Annika, who is away at college during the school year. "The thought of being able to work with my sister and spend quality time with her over the summer made me ecstatic," Sofie shared in her senior reflection this spring. During their first week of camp working together, Sofie even asked to be placed on a station with Annika so they could work together all day.

"We all love working with Sofie," one of our interns, Orion Klassen said. "She always has such a great attitude and a big smile."

"She's a big morale boost," Natalie Points said. "She is human sunshine. And just so fun to work with."



***CAMP MADE AN IMPACT ON  
MY RELATIONSHIP WITH  
CHURCH BECAUSE OF THE  
FRIENDS AND RELATIONSHIPS  
I'VE MADE.***



## AIDAN TINGEN

Aidan is a familiar face around Abiding Presence. He can be found working the AV board on Sundays, volunteering at the food pantry, and running the art station at summer camp.

Year-round, Aidan works at Abiding Presence as our Worship Technology Assistant. He helps with audio and visuals for worship services and operates the live stream.

“Working year round gives me something to do during the school year,” Aidan said. “It would be kind of overwhelming with school, but I like going to help with livestreams and wind down. It helps me to recharge.”

In particular, Aidan says that working closely with Dave Chavez, Music and Worship Minister, has taught him a lot about his own future.

“Before working with Dave, I didn’t know what I wanted in my life,” Aidan shared. “He has a really strong passion for what he does. It made me think that I could find a passion for something that I enjoy.”

Working camp during the summers has also helped Aidan to become more confident and sure of himself.

“I have been able to kind of come out of my comfort zone,” Aidan shared. “Teaching summer camp taught me that I can do this. As long as I know the material by heart, I know I can do it.”

This fall, Aidan will be finishing his time at Northern Virginia Community College as a Visual Art major. He plans to transfer to George Mason to finish a Bachelor’s degree in Art and Visual Technology with minors in Animation and Audio Production.



***BEFORE WORKING WITH DAVE, I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WANTED IN MY LIFE. HE HAS A REALLY STRONG PASSION FOR WHAT HE DOES. IT MADE ME THINK THAT I COULD FIND A PASSION FOR SOMETHING THAT I ENJOY.***

## ALLY TINGEN

"I feel very valued by the community."

During the early days of the pandemic, Ally worked the first summer of the internship program completely virtually and then continued through the 2020-2021 school year in-person.

"I was obviously very lonely when everyone else went off to school," Ally said. "It was nice to have somewhere to work and feel connected to the church and my community."

Being connected through work and other social opportunities has kept Ally connected to the church and her community at home, even when she's away at school. In particular, Ally identified the campus visits that Pastor Meredith and Pastor Kelsey have made throughout the year as being impactful.

"Going and being at school is hard and it's easy to lose sight of that important aspect of human connection," Ally said. "Getting to keep my faith steady and confident throughout the year is really nice and meaningful."

This summer, Ally is working both with ECHO as well as the mental health and neurodiversity ministries at Abiding Presence.

"It feels really good that I'm able to connect with people in those related fields and spearhead getting those ministries more publicized."

The past three summers, Ally helped with the children's ministry and summer camp program. Ally says this experience helped her learn about herself and what she wants in a career.

"I went into the internship program thinking that I wanted to be an elementary school teacher," Ally said. "I got to learn that that wasn't really my vibe, and I was way more passionate about mental health."

Currently, Ally is a rising senior at the University of Mary Washington studying Psychology with a minor in Neuroscience. After college, Ally wants to go to graduate school to become a clinical psychologist.

"I feel like it's extremely beneficial to have a program that's very open-minded and accepting because I feel like this generation is very different from generations that have existed before in the church," Ally said. "I think it's very important to have a program that highlights that and treats it as a strength."



*GETTING TO KEEP MY FAITH  
STEADY AND CONFIDENT  
THROUGHOUT THE YEAR IS  
REALLY NICE AND  
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*BEING A CAMP COUNSELOR  
HAS MADE ME MORE  
CONFIDENT IN WHO I AM AND  
NOT AFRAID TO BE MYSELF.*



## **EDMEE WASHINGTON- CABAN**

Edmee Washington-Caban first started coming to Abiding Presence in late 2021 after her aunt invited her to church.

"I always believed in God, but I stopped going to church at a young age when my grandmother was diagnosed with cancer," Edmee shared. "We stopped going because we usually went with her."

In 2022, Edmee started her first summer as a college-age intern. For Edmee, the internship program and daily devotions have helped her reconnect with her faith.

"Before camp, I never read the Bible," Edmee shared. "I got closer to God through the Bible and hearing everyone's faith journey. It's also helped me feel closer to my grandmother."

In particular, Edmee said her time working as a summer intern has helped her come out of her shell and be more outgoing.

"Last summer was a time when a lot of things happened in my life. My brother moving out of my house left me very shy," Edmee said. "Being a camp counselor has made me more confident in who I am and not afraid to be myself."

During the past school year, Edmee worked closely with Michaela Putnam-Kwon, Children and Family Minister, as the children's ministry intern. She helped to write the Sunday school curriculum and led the art workshop. Edmee even painted a mural in room nine!

"Michaela has listened to me rant and has been so supportive," Edmee shared. "It's nice to have people who listen and I know they care."

In the fall Edmee will be attending the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico as an Architecture major. After graduation, she hopes to attend the University of Virginia for graduate school.



# Abiding Presence CAMPUS MINISTRY

## BUILDING RELATIONSHIP

Building relationships is an integral part of our internship program. Our interns do so much more than work. As a church, we see this program as an investment in people. We are raising up disciples of Jesus who are changing the world. Everything we do is about building relationships with God, peers, pastors, mentors and the church.

Interns participate in activities outside of typical work tasks, including educational trips to museums, spirit days and team building activities. For example, this summer our interns took a trip to the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC to foster important conversations about our role as Christians in the world.

## MENTORS

Creating opportunities for mentoring and networking is a significant aspect of the relationship building we want our interns to experience. Over the course of the summer, interns have one-on-one conversations with church members in their career field and hear church members share about their vocation in large group settings.



Thank you to Erika Maaseide, our writing intern, for interviewing our interns and writing the profiles that made this yearbook possible.



Abiding Presence  
Lutheran Church

*Connecting people to Christ through Community*

Rev. Meredith Lovell Keseley  
Senior Pastor

Rev. Kelsey Kresse  
Associate Pastor for Youth & College-Age

6304 Lee Chapel Rd  
Burke VA 22015  
703-455-7500  
office@AbidingPresence.net  
AbidingPresence.net