



GREEN
CHALICE

 Disciples Home Missions &
The Christian Church in Kentucky



First
Christian Church

GEORGETOWN

First Christian Church

Georgetown, KY

Fellow-Eli Simpson

Mentor- Rev. Chris Cash

[HOME - First Christian Church of Georgetown, KY](#)

Community Needs

When looking at my congregation, my community, and my world, I see many environmental failings and pitfalls. This is unfortunate for both the environment and those who live in it, (which, for a fun fact, is everyone.) The major problems that I chose to address were the lack of green spaces in our community that are dominated by native species, as well as the state of our local creek: the Elkhorn. Non-native species and litter are both things that wouldn't be around in a perfect world and should be fought in ours.



Solutions

The solution to fighting grass and lost space in my community was best done at the level of the church grounds. I and a few members of the church tore up sod in the medians of our parking lots and planted some natives that will one day cover the whole area. During this planting I connected with several members of the congregation and was bolstered in my belief that the work I was doing was supported. I also washable to teach many children in our church how to plant and garden, as well as about the importance of native plants.

To combat plastic and large-item pollution in our waterways, I organized a creek cleanup on our local Elkhorn Creek. I outfitted several people with kayaks, paddles and life jackets who would not normally be able to get on the water due to resources. This served a double purpose as acting as outdoor education and cleaning up a solid section of the creek that we hold so dear. In both endeavours, I was surprised about how gung-ho everyone was to lend their time, ideas and effort. To illustrate the spirit of our congregation through an example from the creek cleanup, we removed two shopping carts from the creek and paddled down the creek with them strapped to kayaks. We were able to do this because no one in our group doubted ourselves and was just there to try to do as much good as possible. No ideas were shot down immediately, they were all given fair play.

Another front that we made a big push on in our congregation was that of providing our congregation with ways of recycling and reusing materials that are not usually able to be used that way. I did this by taking household batteries collected in the church to a recycling center in Lexington that could accommodate them and taking collected pill bottles to Blue Ash Ohio where they could be used by Matthew 25. This keeps these materials out of our landfills and waterways, preventing some of the problems we sought to combat in our creek cleanup before they are allowed to happen.



Collaborators

First and foremost, I would like to highlight the effort that my mentor, Rev. Chris Cash has put into this fellowship. I literally wouldn't be able to have done this without his belief in me and decision to support me through this. His patience and willingness has been greatly appreciated.

I can't thank everyone who helped out over the summer enough. They gave their time and energy to something that they had no obligation to do other than their moral need to. They chose to do something when it is so much easier to choose to do nothing. I commend them for their choice. It was truly surprising the level of interest that our congregation had in my projects, many showed up to everything that I put on this summer and did their very best in every way that they could. I'd also like to shout out the members of the congregation that may not have been able to lend their strength, but were able to give me their ideas. Our congregation is strong with people who have much knowledge of the environment and much will to conserve it. That was so helpful when moving forward with the work.

Our community also came out in support, thanking our creek cleanup crew on the whole route of the river, continuing to support us in the work that we were doing and allowing us to become more vindicated in the importance of it.

I would also like to point out the good work that Matthew 25 is doing, They are an international disaster relief nonprofit that sends necessary supplies to people in need all over the globe. They accept donations of pill bottles of all kinds to be used in donations of medical supplies. Their work allowed me to extend my work into the human aspect of environmental conservation, and really help people with real problems they are facing, while allowing the plastic to be reused. Supporting sustainability and humanity go hand in hand.



Connection and Impact

Some measurable ways that my projects improved our community is in the number of miles of creek cleaned up: 3.5, the amount of trash that was taken out of the creek: 15 bags worth, as well as the number of shopping carts, 2, as well as many other large pieces of trash. It can also be measured in the amount of amount of medicine bottles that we were able to find a use for through Matthew 25: 24 large ziploc bags full, as well as the amount of batteries that we were able to recycle that would not normally be: 17 pounds.

If my internship could only have impacted one person that it did, I would choose a young man named Zabastian. He is experiencing poverty, and has never been in a kayak before. The work that I did allowed him to not only paddle for the first time, but also gave him an opportunity to give back to his community that is so important. He was so happy that he was singing for the entire second half of the float. He would not have had this chance if it wasn't for this grant work.



The Presence of God

I felt the presence of god many times throughout my grant work, but i'll just tell about one. Our group of intrepid litter picker-uppers were going down the creek with two shopping carts strapped down to kayaks. The whimsy of that mixed with the good that we were doing created a really unparalleled experience for everyone involved. The work was sweaty and hard, but most everyone who attended spoke of how they were having more fun than they had had in a long time. I'm extremely proud of that, but I can't take all the credit. I saw god in the fact that these people were having such a good time helping conserve their environment when they could have just spent their Saturday relaxing at home. It gives me hope that there are people like that in the world. I also saw god in the people that were giving us their heartfelt thanks along the float.



Fighting for the Future

The work that I and others in the congregation have done for this grant has made our church more reflective of the love that we preach. Whether by making things easier for our wildlife or human friends, the work that we have done has made our congregation and our community a better, more welcoming place. I know that the work that we have done will continue to affect change for good in our community. I know that I will continue to work to make these programs and activities continue into the future, hopefully holding many more creek cleanups and greening even more of Georgetown. The batteries and pill bottles will continue to be collected and recycled/reused, and our beautiful native plants will continue to thrive and spread.



DONATE PILL BOTTLES FOR REUSE BY MATTHEW 25 MINISTRIES HERE

Matthew 25 is a disaster relief organization that uses these donated pill bottles to send medical supplies to affected areas.

To donate these pill bottles, they need to be cleaned beforehand. All types can be donated.

- 1 Sort by color and type**
- 2 Remove labels and all residue, Goo gone works great.**
- 3 Wash bottles and lids with very hot water and dish soap**
- 4 Rinse and dry thoroughly**
- 5 Put lids back on bottles**
- 6 Place clean bottles in large resealable bags labeled clean bottles in Sharpie.**