



2009 Christmas Offering

Whenever I talk about my faith journey it always starts in the same place, camp. I wanted to attend camp even before I was old enough to do so. My parents can tell you that I cried when they told me I would have to wait another year. That belief in camp as something truly wonderful never changed. Growing up, every summer included at least a week at camp. At both Zephyr and Gwinwood I learned about God and was taught multiple ways of practicing my faith. Camp was always a place for encountering new ideas and asking questions about faith in a supportive environment.

As we grew we were encouraged to take leadership roles in camp. We developed worship services, asked each other questions and lead games. The leadership I learned at camp encouraged me to apply to the Regional Youth Commission my sophomore year of high school. RYC lead me to very new places. Because we were fully responsible for developing the themes and some keynotes for winter retreat we had to ask questions and think harder about our beliefs than I, at least, had even done before. By pushing me out of my comfort zones RYC taught me to love teaching others about God and watching others wrestle with questions of faith.

Through RYC and the camping program I formed many lasting friendships and met counselors and campers who have inspired me. These relationships and the stories of the people I encountered continue to inform my faith. A camp counselor was the first to encourage me to pursue ordained ministry. While at that time I was adamantly opposed to the idea I don't think I would be in my first year in a Masters of Divinity program without that counselor and others like him. Without my experiences with the Regional Youth Counsel and the camping program I would not be the person of faith that I am today.

Laura Jennison Reed, Seminary Student
North Hill Christian Church, Spokane

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