



Fall 2024 PCM Newsletter



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Berry French

CAMPUS MINISTER

There are a thousand things to celebrate and highlight about PCM's thriving ministry these days, but to pick just three:

- the continued uniqueness of PCM's student-led ministry through our Leadership Team (9 students leaders these days) as one of our signatures;
- our updated staffing model including our Pastoral Resident program and a Fellow in Campus Ministry;
- and the PCM alumni reunion weekend in mid-November!

You know how effective our L-team model is. We've continued to emphasize this hallmark leadership development which ensures our programming is extremely relevant to college students. Many of you have heard about PCM's commitment to training future campus ministers for the PCUSA denomination through our innovative 2-year, full-time, fully-benefited **Pastoral Resident program designed for a recent seminary graduate**. We are currently in the process of recruiting and hiring our third Pastoral Resident to start the summer of 2025 (and serve through summer of 2027). Rev. [Paul Burgess](#) is our current resident (position description [linked](#)).

We also launched a **Fellow in Campus Ministry** position this fall for an increased-to-20-hour-per-week position that responds to our need for in-

crease staff to provide both programming and pastoral support for our growing number of students (we're up to 80 per year) and growing number of program/small group offerings (we're up to at least one offering Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of each week during the semester ... that's 5 days a week students are being cared for and their faith nurtured through PCM). [Jillian Marcantonio](#) is our current Fellow.

What a joy to gather to celebrate PCM's legacy and current ministry with **over 100 alumni November 8-10 weekend!** For the first time in PCM's modern history, we gathered in Chapel Hill to reconnect with alumni from the past 25 years--plus previous UPC pastor Bob Dunham, current UPC co-pastors and PCM alumni Jarrett and Meg Peery McLaughlin, and the three previous campus ministers Mindy Douglas (1999-2001), Caroline Craig Proctor (2001-2008), and John Rogers (2008-2020)!

PCM alumni from every class from 1999 to 2024 were present, and a PCM alumnus from 1992 was our oldest alumni present. We had alumni fly back from Salt Lake City, NYC, DC, and Atlanta for the weekend of celebration. It took a year of preparation with a committed [planning team](#) of fifteen PCM alumni, from class of 2001 through class of 2024, and from all accounts it was a wildly successful weekend!

We had perfect weather for a powerful celebration of PCM and we were also able to have a proper thank you and send off for [John Rogers](#), who completed his service to PCM in the middle of the pandemic (spring 2020) after flying back from a PCM spring break trip to full-on pandemic.

After a social gathering Friday evening at the Crunkleton, a Carolina basketball museum tour Saturday morning, and class lunches at various establishments in Chapel Hill on Saturday, we gathered for an intergenerational (kids of PCM alumni, plus students, plus alumni) kickball game on the Carolina Quad Saturday afternoon. More than 175 alumni, spouses, children, previous staff and current Board members gathered for a banquet at UPC to hear about the thriving of PCM these days! We continued the celebration with a Sunday brunch and UPC worship with PCM alumni Meg Peery McLaughlin preaching! Photos of the weekend [here!](#)

Beloved reader, prayers that you are reminded of your primary identity as a beloved child of God, and may the Triune God continue to bless you.

Berry



PCM Happenings





Emma Wilcox

CLASS OF 2028

Before I arrived at Chapel Hill this fall, I knew I wanted to join PCM, but I never would have imagined just how special of a community I would become a part of. I grew up Presbyterian and was always an active member of my church's youth group, so PCM was my way of being able to continue this throughout college. However, in the four short months of my first semester, PCM has brought me my best friends and countless incredible experiences.

During my first week at PCM, I was overwhelmed by the number of people and the excitement in the room for our first Thursday dinner. I remember sitting with all the first years I had just

met for the first time earlier in the week, bonding over this shared feeling of newness and the extraordinary home-cooked meal we were eating together. As I came back weekly, I quickly felt at home at PCM. Later in the semester, I decided to go on the PCM Beach Retreat, which was a super fun experience in many ways. First, it was great to spend more time with and bond with my fellow first years and get to know some of the PCMs I never had the opportunity to during weekly dinners. I also loved the balance of fun on the beach and meaningful conversations we had throughout the weekend.

Nowadays, I go to PCM regularly to do my homework,

help in the kitchen, or hang out with whoever else is around. I especially love that no matter who I find when I show up at PCM, I can have a great conversation and feel so welcome. I also love how close the first years have become this past semester. We all love spending time with each other at our weekly dinners, but we also try to find times to spend time together outside of PCM. I can't wait to see what PCM has in store for me during the rest of my time at UNC, and I am glad I get to grow alongside this incredible community for the next four years.



Tim Hackman

CLASS OF 2027

It has been a little over a year and a half since I walked through the doors of 110 Henderson Street into the beautiful community and worship space that is PCM. Reflecting on my time in PCM, I think about all the laughter, friendship, deep theological discussions, and lifelong lessons I have learned. While I have loved every moment at PCM, one memory that stands above the rest is the Fall 2023 beach retreat. This beach retreat occurred during the early part of my first year, and I was hesitant to go because I felt that I did not know the group well enough and I would not enjoy myself. However, I could not have been more wrong, and the PCM beach retreat remains a highlight of my entire first year as the joy, relaxation, and fellowship blew my expectations. What made this beach retreat such a fond memory is the abundance of

love and community present, as well as the wonderful theology prepared and delivered. From the intense beach soccer game to experiencing my first “brie-ology” to deepening my friendships with my classmates and creating new ones with other PCM students, the beach retreat serves as a prime example of how PCM builds such a wonderful community.

The beauty of PCM is that its core message of promoting community transcends the Thursday Night programs into lifelong friendships, “priceless memories,” and even intense trivia at Linda’s. Another favorite PCM memory of mine is learning the role of nature in my faith and understanding the connection between God, myself, and God’s beautiful creation.

As such, I believe it is only fitting to include a flower

analogy to describe how I see PCM building community. Thursday nights at PCM serve as the “root,” as though PCM’s core message of “belong. believe. become” community is created and solidified. Next, a flower needs sunlight and water in order to sprout, and a specific bible verse that puts this into perspective is Ecclesiastes 3:4, which says, “There is a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance.” PCM serves as the rain and the sunlight that the flower wants, as when you need time to laugh or cry, the PCM community is there, and through this, a beautiful flower starts to bloom. Every time I walk into PCM, I see a valley filled with beautiful flowers that have bloomed from PCM being a place for every emotion, every feeling, and every faith, and that is what makes PCM so special to me.



Drew Coble

CLASS OF 2026

Hi PCM! My name is Drew Coble and I am a junior here at UNC studying Biology! What feels like yesterday, I was a first year wandering around campus trying to navigate my new life at UNC. I had been to many different campus ministries throughout the first few months of the semester, but hadn't found one that fit until a friend introduced me to PCM. On a random Thursday in the middle of the semester, I decided to give PCM a try and nervously walked into the program space. Even though I came in right in the middle of the program, within seconds of arriving, I was greeted by a kind and energetic Berry, who spoke

to me like he had known me for years. From my first steps in the PCM space, I was quickly embraced by the PCM community.

PCM has been a crucial part of my college experience and has made a big school feel small. Almost every Thursday, you can find me in the program space around a table sharing a delicious meal and filling the gap that used to be occupied by home cooked meals with my family. PCM is a family of its own.

There aren't many places where you can go into a room and be friends with everyone. Friends that offer comfort

and support through difficult chemistry exams or the cloudy turmoil of rethinking what I want to do with my life. Friends that laugh together and cheer on the basketball team together even when they don't win the Duke ticket lottery.

I am so thankful I wandered into PCM one random Thursday and found my happy place.





Emma Herr

CLASS OF 2025

Hey PCM alumni and friends! My name is Emma Herr, and I am a senior Women's and Gender Studies major here at UNC-Chapel Hill. When I was asked to write this reflection, it was hard not to immediately think of the mountain retreats, Montreat adventures, or even the unforgettable Spring Break trip to Costa Rica. But in the spirit of fall, I want to share about one of my favorite PCM traditions: PCM Thanksgiving!

This is an event you never want to miss (trust me, I had to miss last year for a UNC Women's Soccer game--go Heels!). PCMer pull out their coziest fall sweaters, flannel shirts, and

boots, fully leaning into the season, and we take fun class pictures to mark the occasion. Watching the first-years stress over their class picture pose is especially entertaining—little do they know they've just locked themselves into that pose for every class photo from there on!

One of the highlights of the night is the dessert competition, where fellow senior Brett Bolton has been dominating for years, proudly representing our senior class! Everyone brings their A-game with desserts, from classic pumpkin pies to elaborate chocolate creations. It's always fun to hear people hyping up their

desserts during dinner, trying to sway the board members' decisions. The friendly competition adds an extra layer of excitement to an already special evening.

PCM Thanksgiving isn't a typical Thursday night at PCM. We head downstairs to the Fellowship Hall, trading structured programming for a more unstructured flow. It is a night filled with laughter, warmth, and gratitude, and it is the perfect reminder of why this community means so much to me. PCM Thanksgiving always leaves me feeling lucky to be part of this chosen family that supports, uplifts and celebrates each other.





PCM Thanksgiving





Madelyn McLain

CLASS OF 2024

Hey everyone! I'm Madelyn, a recent class of 2024 alum! After just graduating from UNC and leaving PCM, I moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan. I'm working as a research associate for the next 2 years at U-M's Institute for Social Research. If anyone knows any cool people or places here please let me know!

Since getting to Ann Arbor, I've been reflecting on how PCM is special to undergrad. I'm sure I'm not the only person to somehow be surprised that's actually true—it doesn't exist outside of college. There are definitely theologically similar religious spaces, but no place to experience free dinner and a show, the highs and lows of life, and the beginnings of independence and self discovery communally at the push of four buttons and the turn of

a knob. As much as I miss going to PCM, I appreciate how precious it is that I'll never stumble upon another group like it.

Lucky for me, I got to come back to Chapel Hill for alumni weekend earlier this month, not soon after moving away. Even luckier for me, many of the people who know and love the wonders of Henderson Street also came back. Alumni weekend was a beautiful, intergenerational reminder of PCM never leaving you. It felt especially true for my class as we got to return and see many of our friends still active in PCM. Further, it was heavy on the intergenerational as myself and the young children of alumni dominated the other kickball team. I really enjoyed the time to walk the campus with everyone, have long

catch-ups, share meals, and be in the space again.

While listening to Berry talk during dinner Saturday, at one point I found myself forgetting I wouldn't be cleaning up and walking back to my college house. Weirdly though, it wasn't as hard as you would think saying bye to everyone that night. Forgive the cliche, but I know that we'll see each other soon and talk over the phone in the meantime. For now, I'm back in Ann Arbor. I put Mil's print of PCM up in my room and I smile every time I see the two never-returned program name tags I found while moving. I'm excited for all the informal reunions to come (and hopefully another big one someday). See you all soon!





Bryce Lapping

CLASS OF 2018

How about that reunion? Even though we only really knew our own handful of graduating classes, it was clear that every class that has experienced PCM is connected. It's like we've got this invisible thread that ties us all together, way beyond just the years we were in Chapel Hill.

Watching alumni from the 90s and 2000s swap stories felt weird and awesome at the same time. Their energy was so familiar—talking about their

experiences at PCM (and watching national championships, too), sharing those same passionate vibes about belonging to this place that I remembered from my own time. It was like hearing echoes of conversations that could've happened while I was on campus, even though some of these folks graduated long before or after me.

Jarrett McLaughlin spoke about the constant changing of PCM's compo-

sition—how the ending of one class's time at 110 Henderson Street brings with it the beginning of another's. It's a perfect illustration of that invisible thread that ties us all together. Our experiences are part of this larger, unending narrative of inclusion and belonging to both this community and the "Capital C" Church. Through our stories, our time, and our stewardship, we're keeping an important ministry alive, passing the torch in a way that makes PCM timeless.





PCM Alumni Weekend





Paul Burgess

PASTORAL RESIDENT

Fall has well and truly fallen, and the color of the leaves and the crispness of the air tells me we're starting to turn towards winter, towards Advent, towards Christmas. I'm not really built for the cold, so this has never been my favorite time of the year, but the bittersweetness is especially pronounced this year, as it marks my personal process for beginning to look for a new job, as my time at PCM will be over this coming summer. That makes this newsletter slightly more difficult to write than usual--but that is offset by the excitement that comes from having faces to go with so many more of your names! As I'm sure many of you are already aware, we recently welcomed many of you back to the PCM space for the alumni reunion weekend. No doubt the other folks writing in this space have already expressed, in every possible way afforded by the English language, what a blessing it was to be together. I don't mean to tread again down a path already well-beaten, but however many times gratitude has been expressed for the weekend, it's abundant enough that I think it well worth repeating once more.

So, as a new minister in the PC(USA) who fully intends to spend much of my life trying to recreate elements of this incredible thing you all have helped build, let me tell you again what a gift this ministry is, and what a blessing it is to me to be a part of it for this season...and how PCM's

goodness was brought into focus by our alumni gathering.

See, college life can be frantic. You're endlessly inundated with new experiences, with a relentless barrage of expectations and relationships that demand attention. Caffeine addiction, all-nighters, drama between friends, anxiety, new opportunities, minor breakdowns...these are notoriously common features of the college landscape. What I'm trying to say is that college has a way of keeping your attention on what's right in front of your nose, and it's rare to be afforded the time and space to come up for air and consider a broader perspective.

That's one of the reasons I appreciated being a part of a church community when I was in college myself--it was a reminder that I was connected to a broader family that exists out of the self-contained snow globe that college life can sometimes become. It exposed me to folks who are out in the world, whose priorities and values reflect a life lived outside of the university sphere. It's a healthy, holy reminder of the connection and community God calls us to, and I'm endlessly grateful for it.

So you can imagine what a delight it was to see current PCM students experience that same connection this weekend, as we welcomed folks who have experienced the love of Christ through PCM over the course of the

last few decades! It was a gift to me, personally, to see how this ministry has evolved and grown and changed over the course of time. It was a gift to current students to get a clearer vision of what life could look like in the future, offering an alternative to the many messages they get about what success and fulfillment look like after UNC. And I hope it was a gift to those of you who joined us, to be able to share food and time, to revel in fond memories and celebrate how God has blessed you since you last met.

More than any of that, though, it was a valuable demonstration of the connection we all share. One of the many stories shared over the course of the weekend involved the Zulu philosophy of *ubuntu*: the idea that "I am because we are." It's hard to think of a more beautiful expression of *ubuntu* than seeing how so many people are connected by a shared legacy, a legacy that flows over boundaries of time and space by the grace of the Holy Spirit... than seeing the fullness of how our lives are interwoven and implicated in one another, in how we fit together as chapters in an epic authored by the one who is the author of all.

All this to say, it was a privilege for myself and PCM students to pull ourselves away from the frantic tumult of college life and celebrate just how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ. I'm grateful that you, too, are a part of it.



Jill Marcantonio

FELLOW IN CAMPUS MINISTRY

I used to have a post-it note above my desk that said: “what is home?” Questions of family and home have always stuck with me, despite having the privilege of a consistent home and a (generally) stable family. I have found many places that have been places of safety and security for me over the years, and I am grateful to God that I can count PCM now as one of those.

When I first walked into PCM, I sensed that this is a place that so many can describe as a home. Berry, alumni, students, and board members also described the space and community in glowing terms. I did believe them, but what I have found in the last few months still blows me away. Students are

often napping or cooking in this space; they are doing homework, strengthening relationships, and finding a safe space for their loneliness, doubts, griefs, or joys. They regularly hear that God loves them and that they are welcome.

This foundational aspect of PCM is borne out of a real commitment to and awareness of God’s love, and it allows us to identify and grow in the gifts that God has given us as individuals. My own role as a Fellow on staff allows me to walk alongside students as they tackle the big and small questions of life, while I also work through questions about my own pastoral calling. It is a joy to weekly open Scripture (usually Genesis!) with

students, pray for them, and watch them find their voice in this space. So many students are making faith their own, through discussion, music, and hospitality. Seeking to share the love of God, they are learning how to serve while also having boundaries, and they inspire me in their eagerness to do both.

This is not news to you, but as a newcomer to the community, I want to affirm the special and beautiful nature of PCM. This is a gift of God. And this has taken prayer, intention, and work over many decades. Thank you for the ways that you have shaped this place, for students and staff alike.