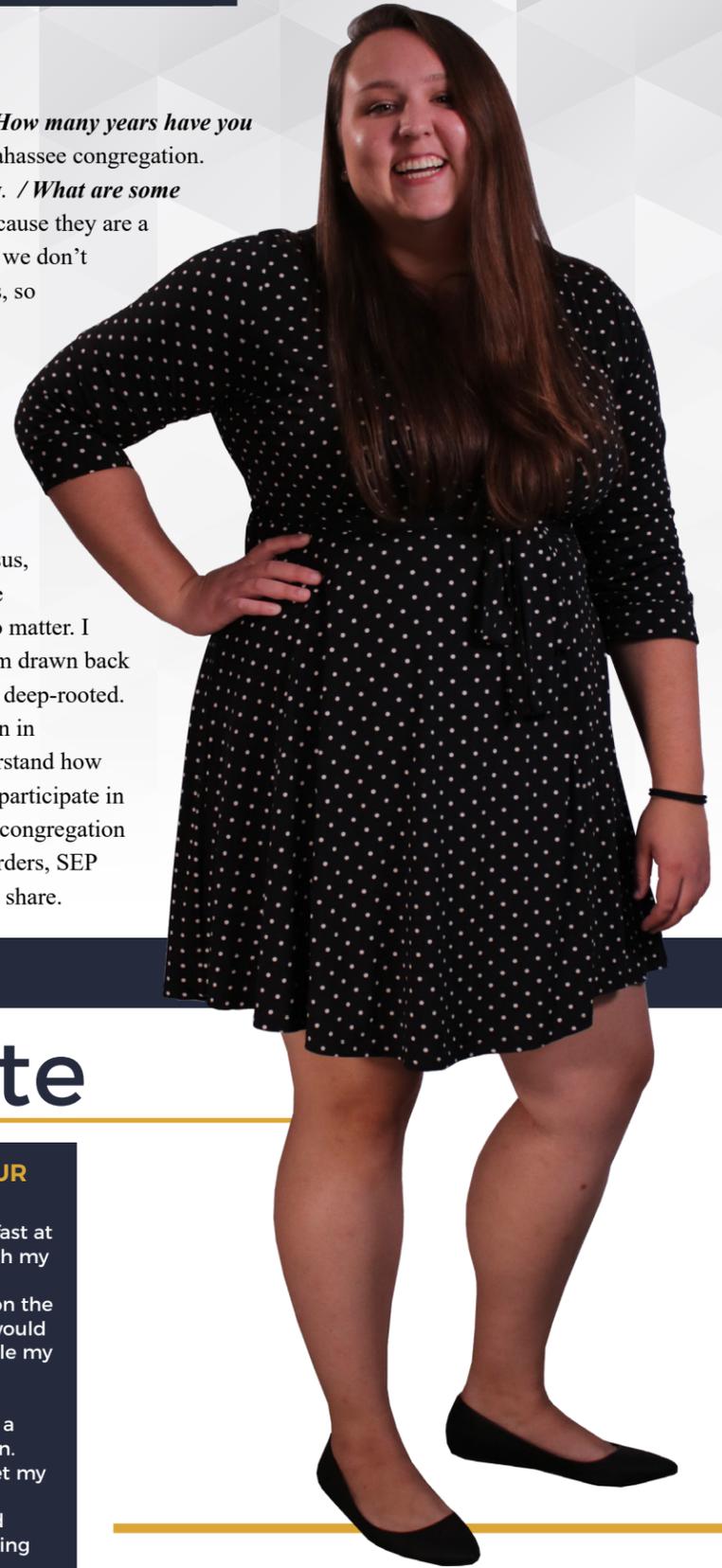


CHARLOTTE RAKESTRAW

Social Media & Correspondence Coordinator / Charlotte, NC

Background:

Where are you located? I just relocated from Tallahassee, Florida to Charlotte, North Carolina. **/How many years have you been part of GCI?** I was born into and raised in GCI. My dad, Jonathan, is the minister of the Tallahassee congregation. My parents actually met at Ambassador University, so GCI has played a big part in my origin story. **/What are some stand out memories from your time in GCI?** Camps and Conferences stand out to me the most because they are a time of spiritual renewal and communion with Christ and one another. With GCI being spread out, we don't always get to see what fellowship and community looks like in different congregations and regions, so having that time to catch up, joining minds, and sharing ideas renews my hope and makes me feel freshly connected to our church. Camps are so special to me, because they are a safe place for people of different generations, from seemingly different worlds and walks of life to come together and experience life and Jesus in a raw, relatable, and multifaceted way. Camp is hard to describe through words alone, but it is probably the best example I have seen of a "high challenge, high support, grace always" environment. **/What are some of your reasons for choosing to participate with GCI in ministry?** It's a simple answer, but I really believe in sharing God's love with people. Otherwise, what's the point? The love and grace we receive from God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit sets us free and empowers us to share it with others. There are too many people suffering, feeling purposeless and just waiting to matter. I want to share the good news that they do matter. I have visited many churches, both GCI congregations, and other various denominations and yet I am drawn back to GCI because the theology and the caring is more than surface level, there is substance there. It's deep-rooted. **/Who has invested in you to support you in your ministry?** My family, and my home congregation in Tallahassee. My parents encouraged prayer and meditation from a young age, and helped me understand how my faith wasn't based on theirs, I had a personal relationship with Christ. They also nudged me to participate in church services, youth group, camp outs, retreats, and other event organization over the years. My congregation has encouraged me over the years and helped fund many of my camp visits including Crossing Borders, SEP SoCal, and Converge with the promise that I would come back with plenty of photos and stories to share.



Get to Know Charlotte



1. I am most grateful for Life, Family, and Community. My twenties have posed some of my worst struggles and threats to the health of my family members and myself. Having family, community, and being given a second chance at life are all blessings I understand to a greater depth now.



2. I am energized by being outside, crisp weather, mountains, roadtrips, listening to music and dancing with friends



3. My greatest accomplishments: Staying alive. Leaning into change.

4. 5 things I can't live without: Family time, Friendship, Quality time with my pets, Music, Creative Freedom

DESCRIBE YOUR PERFECT DAY.

I would get breakfast at the Village Inn with my dad, and then we would go fishing on the St. Marks River. I would come home, cuddle my dogs, and then go shopping with my mom, followed by a lunch at Red Robin. Later, I would meet my friends at Wakulla Springs and spend quality time catching up and swimming. Then, my two brothers would meet us at the local arcade bar where we would dance and play games for a few hours. I would then go back home and the three of us would eat pizza, play video games, and watch movies late into the night.

FAVORITE SCRIPTURE?

2 Corinthians 12:9 - I have been meditating on this verse for the last couple of weeks. It is personal to me, because I have a condition called IHH. Having a chronic illness can be isolating, but knowing there are others who have wrestled and pleaded with God about their weaknesses, and knowing they have been answered, though it may not be in the desired or expected ways, is still reassuring.

