



Atlanta Church of Christ ⁱⁿ Gwinnett
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*The birds of the air come and perch in its branches.
- Matthew 13:32*

Issue 24
February 27, 2018

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AcoCG Singles building family!

Our singles ministry countered some of the cold winter weather in late January with some warm fellowship and activities! Joelecia King hosted a women's brunch for the sister in that ministry at her house on the 20th—



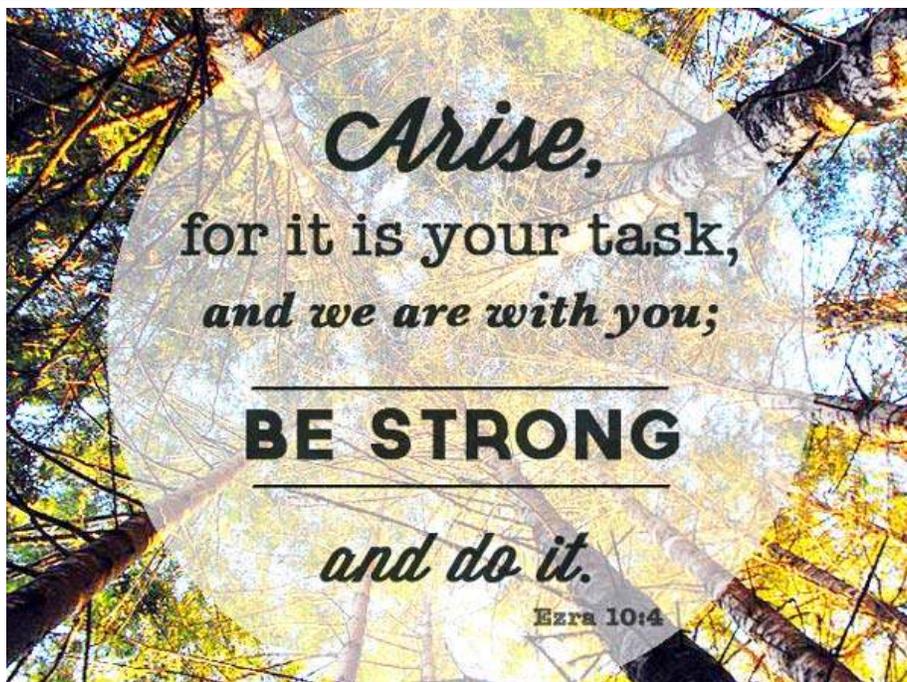
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—while a singles' devo took place at Georgia Gwinnett College on the 26th.



We can see the spirit of the singles in these pictures, and value them as one of the vital parts of our AcoCG family!

With many thanks to Shanelle Cummings for information and pictures!



Catching up with...



Mary Tropiano

Where are you from originally? What would you like people to know about where you're from?

I was born in Troy, Michigan, a northern suburb of Detroit. It's a great place to grow up! A group of us who were good friends in high school go on a trip together every year – they're lifelong friends.

How did you come to live in the Atlanta area?

It's an interesting story behind that! I was working for an airline, which made me have to move around a lot. One day when I was working at a terminal gate at Memphis, I upgraded a man to first class, and while we were talking he told me he was the head of HR for FedEx. I jokingly told him I would upgrade him in exchange for a job offer in Atlanta – and two weeks later, I was starting my training for FedEx!

What do you do for a living? How did you come to be in that field?

I recently retired after 32 + years with FedEx—mostly as a courier, but also in customer service and sales. It was a great job for a single mom, because it provided good security. I had worked for different airlines for ten years, and the opening with FedEx gave me the opportunity I needed to settle back in Atlanta with my husband.

Tell us how you first got involved with disciples – what was your first impression of the church?

I worked with Moose Peterson at FedEx. At that time I was going to a large church in Snellville but I felt disconnected. I would talk with Moose while we were waiting for freight at the airport, and it turned out I lived four doors down the street from the Beckers, who were good friends of his. Sometimes I would see him there. His wife Kay invited me to International Sunday, but I didn't go because it felt awkward going to such a big event where I only knew a couple of people. Then one day Moose said, "God told us to move to Kansas" – I'd never heard anyone talk about God that way before, like they really heard Him speak!

I'd seen the Beckers but didn't know them, but the Becker kids knew my dog Wally because they'd seen me out walking him. One day when I was walking Wally, I checked in on impulse with the Beckers to ask after Moose, and I met Marisabel. That's when I found out they were moving to Kansas, too. We talked about church, and Marisabel invited me to come to church with her. The church I went to in Snellville was a megachurch, which meant they wouldn't necessarily miss me if I didn't come. I followed the Beckers to church, and it felt intimidating at first, but soon I realized that everyone there was warm and friendly. We sat up front, and I met about 50 people that first time!

I came back again, and was introduced to Julia Anglin and then Mary Fields and Mary Hall. I liked it that they were so friendly, and that we engaged in conversation that went past, "How are you?" They asked me to study the Bible, but first I had schedule conflicts, and then I was sick. Marisabel brought me soup, which was really nice. I helped Marisabel with the yard sale before their move, so we talked for the next three days, and then I was ready and started Bible study. I couldn't believe people were really this warm – they really cared! This was the first church where I really felt the love of brothers and sisters, of children of Christ. We really live it!

What has surprised you most about life as a disciple?

A weight was lifted—God has my back all the time and I really know it, even before I ask. I have to be observant to know God's will versus my own thinking – I'm strong-willed, but God is more strong-willed than me! If I leave it to him, He'll work it out.

What lesson have you learned as a disciple that still helps you today?

Trust God! If I just follow God's word and do what He says, He will lead me down the right path and help me avoid a lot of pain that I may never have seen coming.

What do you wish people outside the church knew about following Jesus?

How much fellowship, fun, love and freedom we have with God in our lives – it's such a wonderful feeling! I have more fun with my family of disciples than I ever had without them.

What has your biggest challenge been in following Jesus? How do you deal with it?

Having quiet times, and being disciplined about it. I've had to find what works for me – it's amazing what God will reveal when I do! I use the YouVersion Bible app on my phone and use different plans they have there – it reminds me when it's time to do it. Also, being patient and waiting on God. It's His timing, not mine! Patience does not come easy; let God be in control.

What is your favorite scripture?

Matthew 19:26, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" – as humans we're so weak, but God is so strong – He is Almighty!

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time—interests, hobbies, organizations you belong to?

I love tennis—for the sport and the fellowship. And I have taken up pickleball in retirement – it's very fun! I also enjoy working out in the gym, and playing board and card games.

What might someone be surprised to know about you?

I moved 12 times in three years! Michigan, Texas, Arizona, Florida, then Texas again and Florida again, Minnesota, Missouri, then Michigan again. I ended up in Georgia, then moved to Memphis, Tennessee, then I wound up commuting to Georgia before I moved back here. I've lived in Georgia longer than I've lived anywhere else in my life, and I'm excited to see where God will have me moving next – I have to be patient and see where He wants me.

If you could speak to yourself as you were ten years ago, what advice would you give yourself?

"The decisions you make have consequences that shape your future in ways you can't foresee – seek wise counsel!"

"Super" memories that last!

Super Bowl Sunday 2018 saw the Andrews and Tench family groups partnering to watch the game at the home of Burrell and Felicia Pope. The delicious dishes on the menu included Roxanne Galbreath's potato skins, Andrea Tench's peach cobbler, and Shannon Andrews' Nutella brownies, while the kids got to decorate their own football player cookies. The men watched most of the game in the private theater room. Patriots fans—including Jerome Tench—were in the minority, partly due to many Falcons fans' vivid memories of last year's Super Bowl loss, which led Shannon to call New England the "evil empire." She added, "Most everyone was rooting for the Patriots to lose...there were still feelings of anxiety from last year's game. I danced in the kitchen when the Eagles won. Many of us celebrated." Whatever team the participants were rooting for, the fellowship, food and fun made this party a win!





With many thanks to Shannon Andrews for information and pictures!

We welcome news and pictures on interesting personal stories, family group activities, and more. Please send them to Nancy Berry, nberry2@gmail.com. Thank you!

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