



Change makers

Only at Wesley

Nick and Rachel de Bos-Haigler

As a married couple, Nick (MDiv, 2017) and Rachel (MDiv, anticipated 2018) deBos-Haigler each feel a call to a unique kind of ministry. Though they both plan to pursue ordination in the California Pacific Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, they each have a distinct ministry passion that has been nurtured by their time at Wesley.

Nick, who graduated this year, feels God calling him to outreach or extension ministry, possibly as a chaplain to unhoused neighbors. Rachel's calling is in the intersection of arts and theology.

"I have one more year before I graduate and am still in the process of seriously discerning what my call looks like exactly," Rachel said. "Being here at Wesley is helping me learn the necessary skills for ministry and explore my passion for the arts and theology. I am learning that creativity and art can be incorporated into all kinds of ministry."

Both Nick and Rachel received scholarships, making study at Wesley financially possible. Their time here has given them the opportunity to ask theological questions and continue learning while providing the resources, role models and peers needed, Nick said. When reflecting on his three years at Wesley, Nick said the faculty modeled engaging people from all walks of life. That is an example he will take with him into the local church and community where he ministers in the future, he said.

After graduation, Nick will continue serving as a local youth pastor in Bethesda, Md., while Rachel finishes her degree. They plan to move back to southern California after Rachel graduates in May 2018.



Jon Petty

Jon Petty (MDiv, anticipated 2018) began his seminary journey with a leap of faith and long drive. Petty left his fulltime job in Kansas City, Mo., to attend seminary across the country knowing God would have to make a way for him financially. An MDiv student and Urban Fellow, Jon received his call to ministry during college in Chicago where he attended an African Methodist Episcopal church.

Wesley, his top pick, offered him the best financial aid package enabling him to receive a top tier theological education. "Without those scholarships, I wouldn't be able to be a student here," Jon said.

Jon acknowledged many of the professors at Wesley as people who have helped him discern his call and grow in his identity as a future pastor. For Jon, the Wesley community is a unique blessing. "I'm so grateful," Jon said. "My experience at Wesley has been both a challenge and a reward within a challenge as I understand what this thing called 'ministry' is. Without Wesley, it would have been a very different experience. If anybody is lucky enough to spend just a few hours here they can see the grace, love and encouragement that are part of this community. Without the support of alumni and donors, that would be very difficult to accomplish."



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Laura Ross

Laura Ross (MDiv, anticipated 2018) arrived at Wesley Theological Seminary in search of a place to combine her faith and intellect. For Laura, Wesley is the perfect place for embodied, experiential learning. As is etched on the cornerstone of the campus library, Wesley is a place, “to unite the pair so long disjointed—knowledge and vital piety.”

During the recent Lenten season, Laura took this Charles Wesley quote to heart by uniting her theological studies with her Lenten discipline. For the 40 days of Lent, Laura chose to wear a head covering. The world became her classroom as she explored the spiritual practice and religious tradition of head covering found in all three Abrahamic faiths.

Laura, a deacon candidate in The United Methodist Church, says her formation at Wesley is vital to her goal of becoming a children’s and youth ministry director. By living out what she is learning, Laura models the incarnational manner in which she seeks to teach. Here at Wesley, she learns, “not only in the classroom but also in the world,” she said. Through the support of generous friends of Wesley, the world is both Laura’s classroom and sacred space.



Heureuse Kaj Ayukwend

Heuruese Kay Ayukwend (MDiv, anticipated 2019) is an international student and Missional Fellow from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Her country has a deeply entrenched culture of male dominance and gender discrimination, she said. In the DRC, Heureuse first felt called to minister to women and girls who have been victims of sex trafficking, domestic abuse, rape, and poverty. Her time at Wesley Theological Seminary is preparing her to confront those issues back in the DRC or wherever God leads her in the future.

Heureuse came to Wesley because she felt called to social justice ministry through her local United Methodist church, wanted to pursue a degree that would be accepted in ministry settings worldwide, and felt Wesley’s geographic location in the U.S. capital would help her learn urban ministry skills.

Heureuse’s dream of working with woman and girls is only possible through her Wesley scholarship. As the first in her family to pursue a master’s degree, Heureuse feels grateful for the scholarship that makes her education possible. “I don’t come from a rich family, so there’s no way they could help pay for my school, so it is really a great opportunity to have this scholarship,” she said. “It doesn’t only make a difference in my life because I’m able to reach my goal, but it makes a difference to my family and to my country because wherever I go, this school will make an impact.”



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