



# MID-ATLANTIC NEWS

## REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP IN THE MID-ATLANTIC

Volume 1, Number 2

December, 2020

### “Praying for a Club Like This”



I officially joined RUF this fall of 2020, and it has definitely been the highlight of my semester. For a long time, I have been praying for a club like this. I remember when I first decided to go to college, I was so excited to join a campus ministry

and find a Christian community and friends. Fellowship has always been really important to me, so finding that in college was a huge goal of mine. I felt like God was really pushing me to RUF this semester, and I couldn't be more happy that He did.

I think that God really surprised me with this club. At first glance, it looks just like any other club. But once you get involved, you quickly realize that there is something very special about it. It is full of people who are amazing and kind, and most importantly, so incredibly passionate about RUF and helping the club grow to spread the word more and more. As I learned more about it, I felt God giving me such a love for the club, so much that I get so excited every time we plan a new event or get a new member. I was surprised at how quickly I became attached to RUF and its purpose, and I wanted to be involved as much as possible. But that is exactly the type of person that I am. God always leads me to get involved because He knows that I thrive in community and fellowship. That has really been my favorite part about RUF, the people and the support. Everyone in the club has been so instantly kind and inviting to me. I can see God working in all of them every time we sit down for a Bible study or a fellowship event. It is both amazing and encouraging to see and be surrounded by each week.

The main way that RUF has grown me this semester is really just by helping me to be more involved in a Christian community and more mature in my faith. I feel so much more love for other people and for spreading God's word. I feel much more confident in my faith and my connection with God. I see myself talking more to my friends and even non-believers about God, something I was never fully confident enough to do. And I really only see myself get-

ting more involved in RUF. I can feel God pushing me now, even after just joining recently, to lead my own Bible studies. And I can't wait for that opportunity.

From the short time I've been in the club, God has already started changing my life. Because of RUF and the people in it, I even got involved in a church close to campus. I am really happy for this because a church community is so important for me to have, especially being on a secular college campus. If it wasn't for RUF, that probably never would have happened. It makes me happy to know that I am spending so much more time now in Christian community, probably more than I ever have. RUF has really been a blessing for me this semester, and God has truly changed my life through it.

— by Rachel Roche

*Sophomore Math Education major at Rowan University*

### Grace in a Pandemic

#### Rowan University

*“I thought I was done with Christianity.”*

That's how a recent conversation with a student went as we discussed his participation in RUF. “I thought I was done with Christianity when I came to college, but being involved in RUF has helped me to see the Bible as God's story and to connect with others who love God and care for each other.” This testimonial is one of several like it we've heard over the past four years of ministering to students at Rowan University and we give thanks to God for what He is doing! The mission of RUF is to connect students to Jesus Christ and equip them to serve Him. In this testimonial, among others, we can see that God is at work through RUF at Rowan University to His praise, and with gratitude to those who support this ministry with their finances and prayers. *Brent Kilman, Campus Minister at Rowan University*



Rowan RUF Bible Study

### Indiana University of Pennsylvania

We began this semester with plans, but did not know what we would be allowed to do. Many larger schools in more urban areas in an abundance of caution remained completely online for the semester. However, in the LORD's providence and being in a more small town setting, we are thankful to report that we had many opportunities to meet incoming IUP students. Excited, but not sure if or how long students would remain on campus, we threw all our energy into outreach. For the first two weeks, we did an outdoor activity almost every day to connect with students: yard games, volleyball, cookouts, firepits, hikes, and even video games and movies nights outside.



RUF students at IUP making s'mores

We've had many encouraging moments like that this semester where it was evident that RUF has a growing presence at IUP. During our first two weeks of outreach, we got the contact information of 125 students who were interested in hearing about RUF events and gained around 150 new followers for our Instagram account. While social media presence is certainly not a measure of ministry success, it is an important aspect of outreach and communication for campus ministry today. As new students we never met before showed up at our events, I would usually ask: "How did you hear about RUF or this event?" Often the answer would be "Instagram." Praise God for His favor in our outreach and the increasing fruitfulness at IUP even in these challenging times *Oliver Pierce, Campus Minister at IUP*

### University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Our First Small Group was a Great Success!!

God was faithful. He brought 18 students to our backyard for RUF's *first ever* small group Bible study here in Baltimore. There was an energy and excitement about being together. We had a great conversation about John 1:1-5, 14. They came at 7:30 and left well after 10pm. It was a great night.

We are in an interesting situation with COVID. While it makes it impossible for us to get onto campus and start ministry in a more normal way, the lack of in-person relationship on campus makes what we are doing very attractive. Existing campus ministries are not able to hold in-person meetings. Because we are not a recognized student organization, we are not bound by those rules. So we are collecting a variety of students from all over. Some of these students are involved in other campus ministries and I expect they will return to those ministries when things open up. So the key now becomes identifying students that are looking for a campus ministry and will be good core group/leadership people. I need to cast vision for these students and encourage them to remain with us after the world opens up some. *Trip Beans, Campus Minister at UMBC*

### University of Maryland

We continue to do a weekly "livestream" RUF Large Group meeting on Youtube (see below). Valerie Meck (first year intern) has transformed our way of communicating during the pandemic and produces the "livestream show" each week. We stream from my living room with help from two of the RUF students who rent a room from me, Alex Na and Robert Eby. Thanks to our smartphone video cameras we involve as many people as we can doing things like: freshman interviews, announcements, trivia games, and leading music. We are now in the tenth week of the semester and I've been preaching on *Encounters with Jesus in the Gospels*. You can check it out here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpuuRfWEQv0>

This year we focused on increasing our small group numbers and reach as a way of gathering and shepherding students. We currently have six small groups led by students studying the letter of James. The format is half the time studying the Scriptures and half sharing and prayer. Please pray for our student leaders and that the Lord would build community and students would shepherd one another in the gospel. *Chris Garriott, Campus Minister at University of Maryland*



University of Maryland RUF Bible study



### University of Delaware

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an enormous impact on college campuses throughout the United States. Students have had to navigate most of the semester over Zoom. Students are feeling lonely and isolated. Anxiety and depression are affecting students now more than ever.

For these reasons, RuF ministry at the University of Delaware remains extremely important and relevant. If there is one thing we can take away from the pandemic, it is that human beings are social creatures. We are not created to be isolated from one another. It is not healthy for us to be alone for long periods of time! RuF has been able to help in this regard! Despite the pandemic, RuF provides opportunities for students to connect with one another and to tune in to small groups, large groups, prayer times, and one-on-ones. Even though we cannot meet in person for large group and small groups, we are thankful to God for the technology that He has blessed us with that allows us to have Zoom large groups and small groups. I am also thankful to God for allowing me to do one-on-ones in person with my students. These have been very positive, and have allowed me to get to know students on a more personal level. *Joey Barnett, Campus Minister Associate at University of Delaware*

### University of Delaware RuF-I

"Recently I received an email from one of our amazing RuF-I volunteers. She wrote, 'Today I tried to finish a book called *In The Land of Blue Burqas*. It gives insights for sharing the gospel with Middle Easterners. As I was reading, a student in the Middle East popped up on Zoom for help with her English. We soon began talking about religion, and went deep into the differences and similarities between our faiths. The exact words I just read from the book were the exact things I needed to say!'"

"Then she told me that she had read stories about Jesus, had even gone to RuF-I, and that she knew you, plus your American volunteers! We talked for hours until her Internet went out. In that time, she talked to her siblings about me... I suggested that the sister start coming to RuF-I, where conversation practice is free. Isn't God amazing? I can openly share my faith with an entire family in the Middle East on Zoom! And I was just praying for RuF-I with my prayer group this morning." *Rick Gray, RuF-I Campus Minister at University of Delaware*

### Lehigh University

I had a heartbreaking conversation with a student the other day. I asked her how she was doing and this is what she shared:

"There has not been a time in the past two weeks where I wasn't either crying at least once during the day or crying myself to sleep. I want God to comfort me through someone or with something," but so far He hasn't. Friends are no longer in person and fellowship is only from a distance.

Isolation from the typical rhythms of life has taken its toll on her. The gap between who God says He is and what she is experiencing seems expansive. But that's not the full story. In spite of this, she continued, saying, "I have to realize God himself, He and His promises are enough. They are my comfort." *Michael Goodlin, Campus Minister at Lehigh University*

## Stay Connected to RuF!

In this season of Thanksgiving we are very thankful to God for sustaining us through a difficult and exhausting semester. We are thankful for sustained financial support. And we are thankful for our thousands of supporters who pray for us and donate to our ministry.

Our RuF accounts always end the year in the black, and year-end giving helps us get there. If you are able during this tumultuous year, please remember RuF as you consider your year-end donations. You may send a check to "RuF" in the enclosed envelope. You may also go to <https://www.givatoruf.org> or scan this QR code. → Type your favorite school or campus minister or area coordinator you wish to support in the box.



If you would rather receive these newsletters by email, contact us at [MidAtlantic@ruf.org](mailto:MidAtlantic@ruf.org). And if you would like to receive weekly prayer requests by email, also contact us at [MidAtlantic@ruf.org](mailto:MidAtlantic@ruf.org).



RuF students from IUP on a hike

## Advent Reflections

"Wake, awake, for night is flying,"  
the watchmen on the heights are crying;  
"Awake, Jerusalem, arise!"  
Midnight hears the welcome voices  
and at the thrilling cry rejoices:  
"Where are the virgins pure and wise?"  
The Bridegroom comes: Awake  
Your lamps with gladness take

Alleluia!  
With bridal care and faith's bold prayer,  
to meet the Bridegroom, come, prepare!"

Zion hears the watchmen singing,  
and in her heart new joy is springing.

She wakes, she rises from her gloom.  
For her Lord comes down all-glorious  
and strong in grace, in truth victorious.

Her star is risen, her light is come!  
Now come, O Blessed One,  
Lord Jesus, God's own Son.

Sing hosanna!  
We answer all in joy your call;  
we follow to the wedding hall.

– Philipp Nicolai, 1599



"...the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime...."

*Romans 13:11-13*

The world is in a dismal mood. In addition to the normal miseries of wars, elections, crimes, etc. we have spent the past twelve months struggling with this deadly Coronavirus. I thought it would be gone by June, but now we are being urged to cancel holiday plans because of a resurgence of infections and deaths. I knew hardly anyone who was infected in the spring, but this time several of my friends have it. Even if we do get together this Christmas, this does not seem to be the most festive moment.

Yet this Advent hymn calls us to wake and rejoice. Paul explains why: in spite of dismal appearances, the truth is that the night is far gone and day is at hand.

The first century B.C. was far more dark and dismal than the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Roman Republic was rapidly coming unglued with all the violence that accompanies a decaying society. That did not prevent Rome from ruling Judea with an iron fist. Godly Jews longed for the promised Messiah, but there was little to encourage such a hope. Nevertheless godly Jews trusted the promises of the prophets and clung to the hope that God would send them a Messiah to deliver them from their enemies and establish His reign on earth.

Today we wait for Christ's return in glory to end all violence, disease, and misery – to bring light to this dark world. Our waiting is not in vain, for our hope is not a halting wish, but a secure certainty. Therefore this is no time to sleep. Christ has come! The light has arrived and the darkness has begun to fade! Jesus reigns over heaven and earth, and will return! When? No one knows, but it is closer now than it was last year! In such a confident hope we can shake off our gloom and throw ourselves into works of light. And we can rejoice! Christmas is our testimony that COVID is not the last word or the defining word of our age. Jesus came once and will come again. And that truth defines everything else. This Advent may this describe you:

Zion hears the watchmen singing,  
and in her heart new joy is springing.

She wakes, she rises from her gloom.  
For her Lord comes down all-glorious  
and strong in grace, in truth victorious.

Her star is risen, her light is come!

As Christmas Day approaches, may

We answer all in joy your call;  
we follow to the wedding hall.

In Christ may you have the most wonderful Christmas ever!

*David Green*



Rowan University RUF students