

THE UPDATE

Pensacola Christian College Alumni & Friends



LOCAL INFLUENCE

PAGE 2

Influencing the world for Christ begins with faithfully choosing to love, serve, and invest in the communities where God has placed us.

Serving *YOUR* Community

FROM THE PRESIDENT



DR. TROY A. SHOEMAKER

Reflecting on how far we've come as a nation brings to mind the idea of influence and how it has lasting effects on the people around us. It has always been our mission to transform our faith into real impact that points others to Christ while bringing light into their lives. In this issue, you'll read about alumni, faculty, and students who take that mission to heart every day and in a myriad of ways.

This is a significant year for our country as a whole, and we're excited to honor America's 250th by focusing on all the freedoms and liberties we are grateful to enjoy and how we as Christians can use them to be a light to others. This milestone is being thoughtfully reflected through special patriotic emphases in concerts and productions, along with art exhibits and inspirational messaging displayed on connection screens throughout campus.

We hope that you take away a level of inspiration and encouragement to take action in your own lives. What steps can you take today to reach out to those around you and be a part of their story, a part of why they turn their lives to the Lord and put their trust in Him?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Troy A. Shoemaker". The signature is written in a dark ink on a light background.

Troy A. Shoemaker, Ed.D.
President

Connect with us



FAITHFUL FOR WHAT COMES NEXT

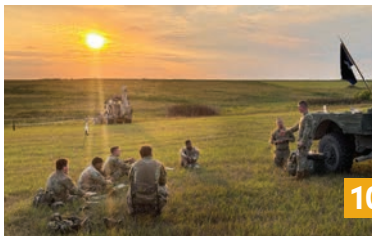
As the United States approaches its 250th anniversary, we're marking the occasion by engaging our nation's history, acknowledging God's provision across generations, and renewing our commitment to invest in our country from a distinctly biblical worldview.

Check out digital assets, exclusive merch, and more at pcci.edu/America250.

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WHAT'S ON THE COVER? ▶

Our in-house designer created a cover inspired by graphic design graduate Briana Spence's ('18) work in Pensacola. Spence's feature on page 18 tells a brief story about what fuels her passion for what she does.



If you haven't subscribed yet, visit start.pcci.edu/Update26

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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

ROOTED IN FAITH INVESTED in COMMUNITY

The Pensacola Christian College commitment to influence the world for Christ is more than a statement of belief. It's a call to action that is expressed through consistent, intentional investment in the communities where God has placed us—meeting needs, building relationships, and creating opportunities for gospel impact.

Influence is the ability to effect change. Transformation can occur through people, partnerships, and shared initiatives that strengthen a community.

While influence is often associated with visibility or authority, its most meaningful expression is found in presence—showing up, investing, and getting involved with real people and real needs.



PCC students partnered with Florida State Representative Michelle Salzman to distribute food during the fall 2025 Thanksgiving season.

Scripture calls all believers to active participation in God's work on earth. Loving others, serving those in need, and sharing the message of Christ require a willingness to step beyond our comfort zones and into the everyday realities of the people around us.

Influence Through Engagement

One of the clearest ways that influence takes shape is through intentional community involvement. Over time, consistent outreach has strengthened the connection between Pensacola Christian College and the surrounding community in meaningful, measurable ways.

As these efforts have grown, so has the College's relationship with local organizations. Local government officials and groups such as the Pensacola Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, and regional blood bank have initiated partnerships and collaborative efforts—an indication of increasing trust and shared purpose. Where there was once limited interaction, there is now ongoing collaboration centered on meeting tangible needs and supporting the well-being of the community.

This kind of engagement reflects a deliberate objective to give back in ways that are both practical and impactful. Whether through service initiatives, partnerships, or volunteer efforts, the goal is to contribute to the community while building relationships that extend beyond campus boundaries.

Breaking Down Barriers

As we faithfully meet immediate, physical needs, consistent engagement builds trust. And trust creates opportunity.

When people and organizations interact regularly, barriers begin to diminish. Misunderstandings are replaced with familiarity. Distance is replaced with connection. Over time, these relationships create natural pathways for deeper conversations, including opportunities to share the hope of the gospel.

This reflects a second key objective to remove obstacles that can stand in the way of meaningful gospel engagement. By investing in the community with sincerity and consistency, the College is helping create an environment where those conversations can happen more openly and more naturally.

Faithfulness that Builds Momentum

This kind of relational progress is not the result of a single initiative or moment. It is built over time through steady, intentional effort.

Relational influence cannot be defined by scale or visibility, but by consistency. It looks like showing up, following through, and continuing to invest even when results are not immediate. Over time, those efforts compound, shaping both perception and reality within the community.

What begins as service becomes relationship. What begins as presence becomes trust. And what begins as trust often opens the door for lasting impact.

A Shared Mission

While Pensacola Christian College remains committed to equipping students with academic excellence and the biblical foundation, that preparation is intended to move outward. A faith that is grounded in truth naturally expresses itself through action by engaging, serving, and contributing wherever opportunities arise.

That practice extends beyond campus as alumni live and work in communities around the world. They carry with them the same opportunity to influence through presence, service, and intentional engagement. Some will do so in highly visible roles. Others will serve quietly and consistently. Both are essential.

Moving Forward with Purpose

The work of community engagement is ongoing. Each partnership, initiative, and point of connection contributes to the larger, lasting goals of stronger communities, deeper relationships, and increased opportunities for gospel impact.

Through sustained, intentional effort, Pensacola Christian College continues to build meaningful connections within our community that not only meet real needs but also create space for lasting influence.

And that is how influence most often works—not through distance, but through presence; not through isolation, but through engagement; and not all at once, but steadily, over time. ▴



JUDGE JOSHUA DUNLAP

PRE-LAW, 2005



DOING THE NEXT RIGHT THING

PCC alumnus Joshua Dunlap serves on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, providing the parties who appear before his court with fair, equal judgment.



Judges for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit meet at the John Joseph Moakley Federal Courthouse in Boston, Massachusetts.



Pensacola Christian College alumnus Joshua D. Dunlap (*Pre-law '05*) serves as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. His deep appreciation for the law inspires him to uphold the liberties that helped our founders build the United States. “Those liberties are a unique heritage,” he shared, “and ought to be treasured and protected.”

A LOVE FOR LAW

From a young age, Dunlap had an interest in government. In high school, he took an elective on constitutional law. Learning about the Constitution in depth and the lengths the founding fathers took to ensure liberty and justice for all, Dunlap was inspired to pursue a career in law. “I realized that a legal career might allow me to play some small part in passing on our heritage of ordered liberty to the next generation,” he said.

Knowing he wanted to study law in a place that would encourage his Christian walk, Dunlap applied to PCC. While on campus, he learned many valuable lessons. “I found that the excellent [educational] foundation I received at PCC allowed me to navigate the challenges of law school successfully, obtain a federal clerkship, and enter private practice at an excellent firm,” he said. “In my view, the training I received [at the College] was easily as good as, or better, than what was provided to other undergraduate students from ivy league schools.”

Dunlap also learned important lessons about leadership. During his academic career, Hurricane Ivan made landfall and caused severe damage to Pensacola and the panhandle’s surrounding cities. The hurricane left the PCC campus without power or running water for several days. “During that time,” Dunlap explained, “I remember seeing President Horton humbly carrying

potable water when I’m sure he could have asked someone else to help him.”

Dunlap continued, “That small insight into his character was a vivid example for me. No matter what a person’s role, humility is one of the most important character traits that a person can develop; it is perhaps one of the most essential traits a person in leadership needs to demonstrate.” After graduating in 2005, Joshua Dunlap used the lessons he learned at PCC and applied for law school at Notre Dame University.

Graduating from law school with his Juris Doctor *summa cum laude* in 2008, Dunlap served as a federal clerk for Judge Paul J. Kelly, Jr. on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit and then began working in private practice in Portland, Maine. In July 2025, President Donald Trump nominated him to the U.S. Court of Appeals. In November, the Senate confirmed his nomination.



Judge Dunlap poses with his family and Maine Senator Susan Collins after his swearing-in ceremony.

“
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JUSTICE FOR ALL

As a judge on the First Circuit, Joshua Dunlap hears many different cases, all with varying subjects and themes. Some deal with criminal law, others administrative or constitutional law, immigration law, and even lawsuits. “The unifying theme of these cases,” he explained, “is the need to interpret and apply federal law.”

Dunlap and every other judge on the court will hear a dozen argued cases a month, as well as look over cases that are submitted on briefs. “The ultimate challenge I face is to try to reach the correct answer and then present my conclusion in a manner that is both accessible to the parties and useful for future judges and litigants,” he shared. “In my view, it is much like working out logic puzzles.”

Using his knowledge of the Constitution and his passion for justice, Dunlap strives to make a lasting difference—much like the founding fathers he learned about in high school. Each day, he does his best to fulfill his oath to “administer justice without respect of persons,” to “do equal right to the poor and rich,” and to “support and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

A FAITHFUL SERVANT

Serving on the First Circuit Court can get stressful at times. But during the challenges he faces, Dunlap makes it a point to remember Who is his biggest supporter. “God’s love is both measureless and individual,” Dunlap explained. “He loves each of us specifically. Knowing His love enables us to trust Him in any circumstance, no matter how difficult.”

Confident in his Creator’s love, Dunlap judges to the best of his abilities. “God has a purpose and design for each of us; we can always seek to do the next right thing and trust God to direct providentially,” he said. Dunlap further explains that in trusting God and trying to do what was right, God gave him his current opportunity as a judge of the First Circuit.

Joshua Dunlap encourages the younger generation to also follow God and do the next right thing. “An individual once told me to aim high,” he shared. “That was sound advice: we should aim to be the best we can be at whatever calling we undertake. If we do so, we won’t have cause for regret.”



Pensacola

FLORIDA

We've known it all along, but we can now officially claim that our beaches are top tier, thanks to Condé Nast Traveler. Pensacola Beach is an ideal oasis whether you're a student needing vitamin D, an alumnus reliving some memories, or an adventurous future Eagle.

This is your sign to grab sunscreen and your beach towel and take the scenic route to Pensacola Christian College campus.



Come see us!






12,000

Hours Investing in Pensacola



In 2025, Pensacola Christian College students lived out their faith and reached others for Christ while contributing over 12,000 hours meeting both physical and spiritual needs in the local community.

 Carpenter's Creek in Pensacola, Florida, is a calm brook where visitors can gather to swim, canoe, or simply enjoy the outdoors. A deck of a neighboring assisted living center overlooks the rippling water, and residents sit outside to talk and savor the sunlight. On a regular basis, Pensacola Christian College students are spotted carrying garbage bags and gathering litter on the bank, ensuring that the area is clean and inviting. Those who live nearby notice and appreciate their work. One prominent voice comes from Sherri Myers, a former Pensacola city councilwoman. Myers, who served from 2010 to 2022, passionately advocates for nature conservation. "Without the PCC students, trash would accumulate over time, and it would require a massive effort to remove all the debris," she said.

Cleaning up Carpenter's Creek is only one way students make a difference. Last year, they completed 12,000 volunteer hours by participating in undergraduate-led organizations, including weekly Christian Service groups and collegians and through Serve Pensacola, a full day of community outreach. While coordinating much of the service at PCC, graduate assistant Gabe Breau (NY) observes that involvement helps students grow spiritually as they reach others with the gospel and Christlike actions. "Service helps students to grow and to be able to evangelize," Gabe shared. "Caring for our community testifies that our God is a God of order and restoration," he added. "When we not only give the gospel but also support the physical reality of our community—both its people and its places—we can have a truly effective witness for Christ."

RHYTHMS OF SERVICE

PCC encourages students to create rhythms of service by giving them many ways to participate in their free time. The College and local congregation at Campus Church work in partnership to offer Christian Service, an outreach providing weekly opportunities to share the gospel and help others. Care Pastor Joshua Burdick (*Pastoral Ministries '00, M.A. Bible Exposition '02*) helps ensure that volunteers receive support. "We're here to encourage the students as they're going out into Pensacola, to give them a church that they can represent," Pastor Burdick shared. "That way, when they have somebody that they lead to the Lord or somebody that needs a home church, they can direct that person to us," he added.

Each semester, Campus Church hosts the Christian Service Expo—an energetic kickoff following a Wednesday night service. After a stirring message about reaching others for

Christ, PCC students leave the auditorium to explore 64 booths. Leaders at each table share their diverse missions; they host children's Bible clubs, visit assisted living centers, clean up parks, and much more. After attending, Brenna Collier (*Jr., FL*) made service a regular part of her schedule. "I was inspired during the first Christian Service Expo my freshman year," Brenna recalled. "I started attending Good News Bible Club and immediately enjoyed getting involved. I have been going ever since, and I became a leader my sophomore year."

Additionally, undergraduates can reach the city through collegians, student-led organizations that support campus engagement in a variety of ways, including providing service opportunities. Adding to her involvement at Good News Bible Club, Brenna visited Pensacola's Safe Harbor Pregnancy Center with her collegian to help renovate the interior and maintain the grounds. "At Safe Harbor, we cleaned rooms inside and sanded surfaces that were to be painted. We also worked outside by raking, pulling weeds, and trimming bushes," Brenna shared.

These regular college activities culminate with Serve Pensacola: an annual city-wide workday. Students, staff, and faculty break into groups and head into the city to restore public spaces and support nonprofits. In 2025, volunteers assisted at 10 parks, a local highway, the Ronald McDonald House, and other sites. "Everybody can participate in Serve Pensacola," said Gabe. "Everybody's in different quarters of the city, and students go out and do lots of different things."

LIFE-CHANGING SPIRITUAL GROWTH

When students add service to their chapel and church involvement, many grow in faith when they see God at work through their ministry. After being motivated by the Christian Service Expo, Landon Powell (*So., TN*) joined Harbor Square Bible Club. Landon believes stepping out of his comfort zone fortified his faith. "During my first semester of my freshman year, I was not involved at all in the community. I was feeling discouraged," Landon recalled. "At the Christian Service Expo, the Lord directed me to the Harbor Square Bible Club. Ever since, I have been attending and now am a leader. It has been nothing but blessings and answers to prayer."

In a typical meeting with his group, Landon and other members teach the Bible to local children, sharing stories from Scripture and answering any questions that they ask. These lessons have allowed them to explain the good

news of Jesus Christ, and some attendees have accepted Christ as Savior. "Showing the Pensacola community God's love and sharing the gospel is truly life-changing," Landon shared. "The Lord has allowed me to serve Him in many different areas, and I am forever grateful and amazed at what He has done in my life."

Noah Hatcher (*Sr., NC*) has also matured spiritually while at college. He began to participate in Men's Door-to-Door Outreach as a freshman. With each visitation, he became more invested in the neighborhoods surrounding PCC. "When I began attending in my freshman year, I skipped a few weeks. Later, I would hear about all that God had been doing while I was gone; lots of people were attending and a handful of people were saved," Noah recalled. "From that point on, I was inspired to not just attend Men's Door-to-Door but to faithfully serve others, hoping that God would use my service to see others saved."

A LEGACY OF FAITHFULNESS

By continually investing in Pensacola, volunteers leave an influence that lasts after they graduate. Sherri Myers is encouraged when she sees undergraduates lovingly maintaining Carpenter's Creek. "It has been such an honor to work with the faithful PCC students over the years," said the former councilwoman. "Without their support, passion, and dedication to keeping Carpenter's Creek clean, it would not be the beautiful place it is today."

Pastor Burdick has also seen the fruit of college engagement in the area. Christian Service, collegian, and Serve Pensacola activities can link people to Campus Church, and some locals have connected with the congregation for worship. "Once the students leave, their work becomes a legacy," Pastor Burdick shared. "That helps Campus Church to reach the community."

In the 12,000 hours completed in 2025, students were blessed by helping others and planted seeds for the gospel. When they join the 27,000 alumni of PCC, many will carry these rhythms of faithfulness to new communities, their influence rippling outward from where it began: while serving Pensacola. "Now more than ever, we need to show the love of Christ and the truth of God's Word," shared student leader Noah Hatcher. "There is no telling where God can take our service once we leave PCC and head into new jobs, new places, and new opportunities all across the world." ▾

KEEPING FAITH AT THE FRONT LINES

Often it starts like this: little boys playing outside with sticks for guns, pinecones as hand grenades, accompanied by verbose knowledge of M1A1 Abrams tanks and more. Then graduation day arrives and those little boys have been transformed into soldiers, airmen, sailors, etc., equipped to defend their country. While each serviceman is armed, there are a select number not geared for combat but to fight specifically on behalf of the spiritual, emotional, and mental welfare of their battalion. These are the military chaplains, and their battle isn't visible or easy. Chaplains also support first responders and those who serve in communities across the country.

A FOUNDATION FOR TRUST

Due to the nature of the job, officers “see the worst of the worst and the evil that comes from sin,” shared Kenn Winn (*Missions '01, M.A.; Bible Exposition '06*), chaplain to the Pensacola Police Department and the connections pastor at Campus Church, Pensacola, FL. “I help connect [individuals] to Christ for the first time or at a deeper level,” he explained, “One of the major challenges in the chaplaincy is getting officers and personnel to trust you.” Winn was encouraged by an out-of-state law enforcement chaplain that it can take a year to 18 months to establish trust. Time is on Winn's side as he often takes ride-alongs with officers, placing him with an officer for sometimes up to five hours. This allows Winn a timeframe to find common ground and personal ways to relate to the officer, thus opening a path of trust and ministry.

Captain Vinny Lieb (*Pastoral Ministries '14, A.S. Criminal Justice '14, M.Div. '17*) values pursuing connections one at a time. Since 2019, Lieb has had the privilege to serve as brigade chaplain for the 117th Armored Brigade Combat Team by preparing for and participating in funeral honors. “Wearing the uniform and being a part of this community is an honor I don't take lightly.” Lieb shared. “Chaplains have opportunities to speak to a crowd of soldiers or pray; however, the best moments are ministry to the individual.”

Having been assigned to a new unit recently returned from deployment, Lieb sought ways to make real connections. What broke down the barriers for one of the influential soldiers was Lieb asking, “What can I pray for?” Since that interaction, the same soldier has brought others to Lieb and even had him speak to his ailing mother, resulting in her accepting Christ as her Savior.



“MINISTRY OFTEN UNFOLDS
THROUGH BRIEF,

YET DEEPLY MEANINGFUL.”



Captain Trevor Shoemaker prays with a fellow service member.

WORKING SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

So, what does a military chaplain do? “The textbook answer boils down to ‘provide and advise,’” said Captain Trevor Shoemaker (*Youth Ministries '17, M.A. Bible Exposition '20, M.Div. '22*), the chaplain for the 82nd Engineer Battalion, 2nd Armored Combat Brigade, and 1st Infantry Division. “My daily routine consists of PT (physical training) with soldiers, counseling sessions, meetings with leaders, and circulating throughout the battalion.”

Natural interest in his soldiers’ unique mission and skillset allows Shoemaker to build relationships and share God’s Word. “I believe the greatest challenge I face is the battle against subjective morality,” he said. “It is very rewarding when I have the opportunity to share truth and demonstrate that when the Bible is correctly applied to daily living it is the most logically and morally consistent way to live.”

Deck plate ministry is a term to describe a chaplain’s active presence among service members and their families, visible and accessible to everyone. Command Chaplain Chris Wagner (*Bible '15, M.Div. '19*) lives this out daily. “I go where my sailors, marines, and coastguard men are to have meaningful conversations, earn their trust, and get a pulse check on the crew’s morale,” he said. “I work with highly intelligent, but young, sailors, who rarely have the opportunity to see what their work accomplishes. Their work is extremely technical and abstract. It’s a daily challenge to help them see how their skills may be used to the glory of God.” From the bulk of his regular interactions, Wagner claims PT as his favorite because “Com-miseration builds comradery,” he said.

BEST USE OF TIME

As a hospice chaplain, Mike Willard (*Evangelism '07*) has had many opportunities to provide meaningful support and spiritual encouragement to individuals at such pivotal moments of their lives. “The [position] constantly demands working with people at some stage of life reflection and grief,” Willard explained. Some of the patients he tends to include veterans and their families, an aspect that has contributed to the next step in his career. “My work with veterans, combined with a long-seated burden for the military has led me to pursue joining the Army as an active duty chaplain,” he said.

Pastor of Woodlands Baptist Church in Rockford, IL, and the Rockford police and fire chaplain, Phil Lien (*Missions '00*) serves in real ways as he shepherds his church and reaches the



Captain Joey Quilty poses with some of his crew.



A special PCC alumni reunion took place at Naval Station Newport, Rhode Island.*



Future Navy chaplain Mike Willard and his family.

MEANINGFUL ENCOUNTERS.”

community in which it's planted. “My ministry often unfolds through brief, yet deeply meaningful encounters in the most difficult moments of people's lives,” he said. “I am typically called to scenes where a death has occurred or where families and first responders are facing sudden tragedy.”

When he responds to a wide scope of emergencies, Lien provides a calm, compassionate presence. “These encounters are often brief, but they can have lasting impact,” he said. “And the aim remains the same: to walk with people through their grief and guide them toward the sustaining grace of God.”

ETERNAL INFLUENCE

Education graduate Captain Tavis Long (*History Education '01*) has recently advanced to another influential position in military chaplaincy. He had been serving as the Force Chaplain for the 32 Religious Ministry Teams that serve 35,000 sailors until he assumed command of the Navy Chaplaincy School in January 2026. “[In this position] I command the U.S. Navy's primary institution for training and professional development of the Navy chaplains and the enlisted sailors who serve as the chaplains' support team.” Long does not take lightly the privilege to influence the spiritual, moral, and ethical wellbeing of the military men and women. “The opportunity to serve my nation and to serve God in full-time ministry is a unique and rewarding experience. I love finding creative ways to insert the gospel into daily interactions.”

For over a decade, Captain Joey Quilty (*Youth Ministries '02, M.Div. '15*) invested in young people as an athletic director and youth pastor until answering the call to serve the military. After earning his M.Div. from Pensacola Theological Seminary, he entered the Chaplain Candidate Program. “My education enabled me to be ready with an answer of the ‘reason of the hope that is in’ me (*1 Peter 3:15*). When I didn't have the answers, I knew how to do the research and find them,” Quilty said. “I have also been prepared by PCC to stand firm in my faith when challenged by other well-educated chaplains who hold opposing views.”

HOW PCC SUPPORTS THE MILITARY COMMUNITY

Acknowledging their valued part of the college community, PCC offers the Patriot Scholarship to students eligible for Federal Chapter 35 (also known as Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance) or GI Bill benefits. This privately funded and competitive financial aid relieves some of the strain from tuition costs for those who are either veterans or dependents of a veteran.

And this fall, Pensacola Theological Seminary will be offering a course intended to enhance a graduate student's preparation for military chaplaincy. Called *Introduction to Chaplain Ministry*, this three-credit course would be an elective in the Master

of Divinity and Masters of Arts programs in Bible Exposition, Biblical Languages, and Ministry. The main objectives for this course would result in integrating a greater understanding of Scripture into various ministry contexts and evaluating current issues affecting ministry in light of biblical teaching. The course includes an overview of the six major categories of chaplain ministry: community, corporate, correctional, healthcare, military, and public safety.

“The most anticipated outcome of this course is that students gain clarity regarding their vocational calling and the distinctive posture required for faithful Christian ministry within institutional contexts,” said Dr. Richard Anderson, the course instructor and retired Air Force chaplain. “Grounded in biblical, historical, and constitutional foundations and strengthened by essential professional competencies, students are prepared to navigate the unique challenges of chaplain ministry across diverse institutional settings. The goal is not merely awareness but readiness to serve as a faithful Christian presence marked by conviction, competence, and compassion.”

When the various branches of troops leave their parents' homes for the first time for training or deployment, they're usually very young and learning to make decisions on their own. They're vulnerable without someone who can advise them. Captain Joey Quilty and many chaplains realize the depth of this need as they've had countless opportunities to pray with military personnel and provide spiritual guidance and support. “The thing that hinders our effectiveness is when we bring in chaplains that are not qualified. We need more Bible-believing chaplains who are physically fit and have sound judgment,” said Quilty, adding, “God is still in our military.”

*Commanding Officer of the Naval Chaplaincy School, CAPT Tavis Long (*History Education '01*) (right center), presided over the Professional Naval Chaplaincy Basic Leadership Course ceremony. Other alumni present included Mrs. Wenona (Wright) Robelen (*Elementary Education '99*) (far left), LT Dan Robelen (*Missions '99, M.Div. '01*) (left center), and the honor graduate LTJG Jason Albano (*Management '16*) (far right).

JAMES & ANNA STRASBURG

MUSIC, 2017 & SECONDARY EDUCATION, 2016



UNEXPECTED MINISTRY

Whether running across America, teaching college students, or caring for children at home, James and Anna Strasburg share lives dedicated to reaching others with the message God planted in their hearts.

“I first saw James [Strasburg] (*Music '17, M.A. Music '19*) singing when he was a freshman. I was a sophomore. He had won the Commencement Contest for men’s voice and sounded like an angel,” remembered Anna Strasburg (*Secondary Education: Mathematics '16*). “I just closed my eyes and listened.” But it wasn’t until a couple of years later that James began pursuing Anna, visiting her where she worked at the on-campus Common Grounds Café. James quickly learned that Anna loved to run and was preparing for a run across America advocating for pro-life and children’s rights. They attended a Fine Arts together for the first time, and James presented Anna with a bouquet made up of folded-up sock roses. Their relationship officially blossomed thereafter.

Today, James and Anna both serve from platforms that represent what they’re called to teach. Since 2019 James has been a voice instructor and now also serves as the assistant chair in the Performing Arts department while Anna homeschools their seven children (four biological, two adopted, and one fostered); she’s also an author, avid runner, and speaker for pro-life and children’s rights. Side by side they’re reaching the world through their life-changing examples.

JAMES’ LIFE-LONG PURSUIT

Music has played a large part in James’ life. He’s sung in choirs since the 4th grade and formally began studying piano at age seven. “I knew I wanted to pursue music as a career, and PCC offered an excellent learning experience and teachers that would challenge me to grow in my craft as a singer and musician.” And as a college student, James was not disappointed. “The excellence my teachers taught in their course material helped prepare me to be successful as a teacher.” Today as an instructor, James strives to emulate the professionalism and examples he observed in the classroom. He still appreciates how each of his teachers taught through the biblical worldview lens and went out of their way to ensure that the class was following along through clarification, review, and investment into spiritual growth.

“Learning to sing is not something that happens over a four-year college career,” James said, a key component he learned along the way. “But it’s a life-long pursuit just as becoming more like Christ.” James took to heart his voice instructor’s comparisons between the student’s voice journey with the spiritual



The Strasburgs on Pensacola Beach.

walk as believers. “One of the things she encouraged me with was that just as we are to be constantly spending time reading God’s Word and bettering ourselves as Christ-followers, we are to do the same as musicians and be faithful day in and day out to put in the hard work of practice.”

Having overcome his own limitations and benefiting from personalized coaching through the music programs, James teaches his voice students with the same methods that helped him. “Each person is uniquely made in the image of God. No one student has the same vocal range, timbre, physiology, and singer’s imagination as another,” James explained. “This means that vocal techniques that work for one student may not work for another, making the studio always a fluid environment where I am constantly working to find the best solutions for each individual.”

As he navigates his students’ needs, what James loves the most about being an instructor are the meaningful connections he makes with them. “Because of the one-on-one instruction students receive in this department, we have a real opportunity to make deep and lasting relationships,” he added.


Along the way, James has been able to realize his dream of performing professionally. “I have had the privilege of performing with the Shining Light Players, a local Christian theater group, for four summer tours as well as other local performances in the show *The Hiding Place*,” said James. “In addition, I have had the privilege to be a part of the Christian musical group Forever Be Sure, singing in two of their recorded albums as well as a few music videos.”

ANNA’S CALLING PLANNED BY GOD

A dedicated wife and mom of seven under six, Anna is living the life the Lord had been orchestrating without her realizing it. Growing up in a loving, Christian family of six siblings, Anna had her parents’ examples of what it meant to genuinely care for the people around her—elderly, students, friends, and neighbors. “When I was in 5th grade, my Christian school teacher taught us the importance of life in the womb. She used Scripture (Psalm 139:13–14, for example), art projects, and more to teach us. That year stuck with me and changed my life forever.”

In addition to having a heart for people, young Anna explored her gift of teaching with her stuffed animals and enrolled her brothers (if she was able) to her homemade school. As she grew older, Anna began tutoring friends and classmates through calculus, U.S. history, and government. “What seemed like merely tutoring to me soon grew into a love for math and history,” she reflected. “Math especially because so many people feel dumb when it comes to math, but I believe they just haven’t been taught it correctly.”

Anna’s desire to share math and history with others was able to flourish in college. She chose PCC “because of their excellent teaching program where I knew I could learn better how to convey my love for math and history to others,” Anna said. “God used my love for teaching to enable me to teach through public speaking while I ran across America for the pro-life movement. The same concepts

A photograph of a family walking away from the camera through tall, golden-brown grass at sunset. The father, wearing a blue shirt, is in the center, carrying a child on his back. To his left is a woman with long blonde hair, also in a blue top. To his right are three children, two boys and one girl, all wearing blue tops. The background shows a line of green bushes and a clear, orange-hued sky. Large white quotation marks are overlaid on the top half of the image.

“ God knew exactly what
He was planning to do with each
part of my life, and **He perfectly
knit it together.** ”

I learned about teaching [math and history] helped me teach the importance of protecting life in the womb.”

In college, Anna co-founded the organization, If Life, which educates and advocates on behalf of the preborn and their mothers. The courses she took also coincided with her pursuits. Speech classes were foundational for the hundreds of presentations Anna has given across America; math classes inspired an ability to think outside the box when resolving challenges; and Dr. Watson’s Origins class helped to establish an even firmer foundation from the Christian perspective. “[The biblical worldview] was and is highly important when addressing the biggest human rights abuse of our time,” Anna said. “And having the confidence to know what I believed and why was essential before setting off into a field where I would be challenged in almost every way.”

After she graduated, Anna ran and biked across America for the pro-life movement, speaking at venues along the way. Her cross-country experience turned into a book entitled *One Mile More: Running Across America to End Abortion*. Education continues to be a part of Anna’s everyday life as she homeschools her children. “What always amazes me is that what started with stuffed animals and siblings has become one of the main focuses of my life,” Anna commented. “God knew exactly what He was planning to do with each part of my life, and He perfectly knit it together.”

RECOGNIZING MINISTRY EVERYWHERE

James and Anna Strasburg get to experience some of the immediate rewards that come with living a life in service to others. As James invests in his music students, he fosters meaningful relationships. “God in His perfect goodness was at work in my heart and has allowed me to use my challenges as ways to better connect with students who come through my studio,” said James.

While she speaks to a crowd, Anna is positioned to witness people realize the true value of life and gift of forgiveness. “With advocating for children’s rights, it’s seeing peoples’ perspectives shift through something as simple as an educational speech,” Anna expressed. “Most people believe abortion is okay simply because they don’t know what it is. Once they understand what it is and the reasons for it, most change their mind. I also get to share with them about forgiveness in Christ which can be one of the most impacting parts of a speech.”

Together, James and Anna share the special opportunity to raise their children and care for the precious adopted and fostered children they’ve added to their family. “God has opened an unexpected ministry to foster children that was not in our initial plan,” James said. “But God has showed us that ministry can look very different than on a grand stage. Ministry can be in our own homes, in our neighborhoods, and to the very people around us.”



Anna speaks at Young America's Foundation.



James sings in a recording studio.

BRIANA SPENCE

GRAPHIC DESIGN, 2018



BLENDING PLACE AND STORY

Graphic design graduate Briana Spence draws out the beauty of Pensacola with a personal touch. Her timeless pieces can be found around the Florida Panhandle.

After a warm sunny day out on Pensacola's white sugar sands and turquoise waves, many beachgoers take the Pensacola Bay Bridge (also known as the Three Mile Bridge) and East Gregory Street back into the city. But just before passing the iconic Bagelheads or trendy South Market, a 40-foot pelican sign welcomes the sun-weary travelers back to land. This recent landmark was the handiwork of Pensacola Christian College graphic design graduate Briana Spence (*Graphic Design '18*).

Founder of her own design studio, Briana has added her artistic touch tastefully around Pensacola through murals, signage, branding, merchandise sold at the Palafox Market—and more. She's been sharing her passion with the world since 2020. "I run my own design company, *Spence Studios*," she said. "What began as a dream has turned into a full-time career, and I've been grateful (and busy!) ever since."

ROOTED IN PENSACOLA

Pensacola has had a special place in Briana's heart for a long time. As a young girl, she was brought to the area to visit her grandparents. And since Briana's parents, Richard (*Bible '89*) and Angela Tozour (*Secretarial Administration '93*), earned their bachelor's degrees at PCC, attending their alma mater made sense. "And let's be honest, the Fourth Year Tuition-Free program was a huge plus," Briana added. "Graduating debt-free was such a huge blessing that I'm thankful for every day."

After completing her bachelor's degree and getting married, Briana spent several years living in Pensacola. "I never expected [Pensacola] to become such a big part of my career," she said. "God's hand has been in every step but especially in bringing my husband, Andrew (*Youth Ministries '19*), into my life." The Spences spent several years serving at a church together before relocating to South Florida. Along the way, Briana incorporated local landmarks into her work for fun and shortly had multiple requests for them. "Before I knew it, my art was popping up at the Palafox Market and in local shops around town."

Briana's time in the Panhandle for college and early married life has taken root in her heart—both personally and professionally. "That season taught me so much about patience, purpose, and people, and it still influences how I work and live today," she said.

PREPARED FOR SUCCESS

Pursuing graphic design at PCC set Briana up for a successful future in her field. "[PCC] gave me a solid foundation and a creative tool kit I've been able to build on over the years," she shared. "More than that, it helped me develop a good work ethic and learn how to manage real-world deadlines (those all-nighters came in handy!)."

Some aspects of running a business can be a bit tedious. "There are always revisions, which are part of the job and often lead to stronger outcomes," and as for the legal side, "It can be tricky," Briana said. "But I've grown more confident with each project." Confidence to develop her own design process and to start a business stemmed from the preparation and experience she received while in college. Classes, peers, and mentors inspired Briana to graduate confident and ready to embrace the next steps head-on. "The friendships I made at PCC were one of the best parts of my college experience. Those friends encouraged me through classes, projects, and critiques," she added. "They're still a part of my life today!"

As a student, Briana had several pieces entered for the American Advertising Awards (ADDY) that recognizes creativity and excellence in advertising art. She won a few gold ADDYs—even a Best in Show! "It's always a little surreal to be recognized, but it's also a great reminder of how far I've come since those early design classes."

Adding to this was the more recent achievement of designing the winning concept for Pensacola's welcome sign. "That was such a fun surprise!" shared Briana. "The City of Pensacola held a design competition, and I submitted a concept that won," she explained. "Two years later my design is now welcoming thousands of visitors each year. It still blows my mind." Leading up to its reveal, Briana partnered with the City of Pensacola and Dalrymple Sallis Architecture as her design was developed to full scale.

PASSION INTO PURPOSE

From day to day Briana can be found "answering client emails, juggling project



Briana paints the mural at the City of Gulf Breeze Shoreline Field at Shoreline Park.

deadlines, sending off designs for feedback, making revisions, or managing the less glamorous (but super important) side of business," she explained. "Some days I'm designing a mural. Other days, I'm designing a logo over coffee." Her schedule varies all the time—which Briana loves. "I get to choose who I work with and when I work. That freedom has allowed me to stay creative, build a business that reflects my values, and say yes to the kinds of projects that excite me."

Every time she visits a new place, Briana comes home full of ideas and excitement to create something new. "Travel is my biggest source of inspiration," she said. "We're all about soaking in new places! It can be a quick weekend trip or a big overseas adventure. This past year, some of our favorites have been France and Hawaii, along with a few sweet family visits closer to home."

When asked what her favorite projects have been, Briana responded, "I honestly don't think I can pick just one. Each project is special for different reasons, whether it's the story behind it, the process it took to finalize it, or where it ended up." Throughout her specific designs or products, Briana has applied a common theme of custom illustration. "It's something I've always been drawn to, and over time, it's really helped me define my style," Briana commented. "Whether I'm working on branding, murals, or packaging, I love weaving in hand-drawn elements that give each piece a personal touch."

Briana Spence has loved art for as long as she can remember. "And graphic design felt like this perfect blend of making things aesthetic and practical." As she blends her love for place and story together with visual beauty, she continues to grow a following. And in Pensacola, particularly, her pelican sign continues to reach 100,000 travelers daily. ▴

News from the Nest



SOUTH REGION COACH OF THE YEAR

In addition to being the **NCCAA South Region Coach of the Year for the ninth time**, women's head basketball **Coach Jared Sellars** (*Physical Education '00*) reached **300 career wins**. "Basketball gives us a unique platform for service and ministry," he shared. "We get to see young people grow as players, leaders, teammates, and followers of Christ."



25 in '25

Lady Eagles Volleyball

ended their 2025 season with 25 wins,

the most in program history

Sydney Anderson (Jr., GA) received NCCAA's highest honor, the **Dr. Vickie Grooms Denny Award**, for athletic merit and Christian character. She also accepted **First Team All-American** and **First Team All-Region** for a grand total of three awards. "What I love most about playing volleyball at PCC are my best friends and playing my favorite sport in a Christian environment. Volleyball isn't just a sport to me. It's an outlet and a way for me to grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually."

Both the
Lady Eagles Basketball and Volleyball
 teams went

undefeated

at home this season

Eagles Soccer took
 home their

4th national championship title

in 2025

The **Eagles** experienced an exhilarating season headlined by a **4-game home winning streak** that concluded with an 89-87 overtime triumph against Toccoa Falls College.



The NCCAA named **Boaz Da Silva** (So., Brazil) **National Player of the Year** and **First-Team All American** for leadership excellence. "For me, these are more than individual awards. They are team awards because without my teammates I would not have been able to achieve them," Boaz said. "Winning a national championship proved how persistent and resilient our team is."



Lady Eagles Basketball captured the **South Region Championship** in a 63-57 match against Bob Jones University, securing the title for the fifth time since 2020.



After joining the PCC volleyball program in 2025, head coach **Ryan Vanderboegh** (*Sport Management '08*) guided the Lady Eagles as they **set a record for overall wins**. Following this remarkable first season achievement, the NCCAA chose him as **South Region Coach of the Year**. "I appreciate having the opportunity to build team culture around honoring Christ through volleyball," Coach Vanderboegh said.

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Faculty on Mission

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While leading Youth Outreach Ministry teams on missions trips, faculty members share their love for evangelism.

When most classes pause for the summer, faculty members at PCC can volunteer to lead student missions teams through Youth Outreach Ministry (YOM), an organization working to spread the gospel. During these short-term trips, leaders proclaim Christ, assist missionaries, and share their love for evangelism with students. “Our purpose is for souls to be won and for believers to be edified,” said Dr. Brian Bucy, who coordinates YOM trips.

Since she began leading trips in 2015, chair of nursing Dr. Heather Hartkopf (*Nursing '09, M.S.N. in Nursing '11*) has helped students build a burden for missions. She has noticed those involved gain new perspective. “Rather than viewing missionaries or international ministries as distant or abstract, students relate to missionaries and international ministries as real people and places where God is actively working,” she shared.

Missions trips help students develop lasting passion for gospel outreach. After joining faculty leaders on the field, some undergraduates return or give support through campus groups like Mission Prayer Band, which influences the whole student body. “When you put young people in ministry, God will set the fire in their souls,” said Dr. Gregory Mutsch, the vice president for institutional advancement. “Lamentations says, ‘Mine eye affected mine heart,’” he quoted from the Bible. “If the youth can visualize what’s going on, their hearts will be moved.”

"I would encourage every student to go on a missions trip!"

PREPARING FOR TAKEOFF

Because teams travel to foreign countries, faculty leaders and participants prepare for language and culture during the semester. "Those things take away from coaching and teaching responsibilities, but the rewards are wonderful when your team presents well and honors the Lord and our College," said Coach Mark Goetsch, who has led trips to Romania since 2008.

To effectively partner with missionaries, leaders arrange activities, accommodations, and mealtimes in advance. They also facilitate fundraising to ensure interested undergraduates can travel. Dr. Hartkopf and natural sciences teacher Dr. Carlos Alvarez have carefully prepared for trips to two to three neighboring European countries. "We plan with pastors in Europe, [making] sure everything is in place so the students are safe and rested," Dr. Alvarez shared. "And we print prayer letters and cards to help students raise support."

Vasco Montgomery (*Jr., GA*) went to Europe in 2024 and 2025. He appreciated how faculty leaders set him and his peers up for success through clear communication. "One major way they invested in us was through the meetings before traveling," he recalled. "Each leader was very understanding of the needs students had about the trip."

LIFE ON THE FIELD

Once leaders and students step off the plane and onto the field, they find many ways to serve. Liberal Arts teacher Mrs. Heather Fulfer (*English Education, History Education '94, M.S. Curriculum and Instruction—English '15*) and her husband Mr. Alex Fulfer (*Youth Ministries '94*) have led trips to the Philippines and plan to return in 2026. While visiting missionaries Mr. and Mrs. Arvin Tulabot in Metro, Manila, the Fulfers' group supported the church, school, orphanage, and assisted a VBS of one thousand children. "Our team helped with the singing and the Bible story," Mrs. Fulfer recalled. "Then we talked with the children. They are always so thrilled by any gesture of affection."



While in Europe, Dr. Alvarez and Dr. Hartkopf partnered with Baptist churches to present evangelistic concerts outdoors and in secular venues. Between pieces, the missionaries shared the gospel. "Evangelism in Europe looks very different than it does in other parts of the world," Dr. Hartkopf explained. "People in these cultures are typically unwilling to come to church. Instead, we learned that events with a cultural or historic theme are far more effective." In 2024, they partnered with Kieth Bloyd, missionary to Italy, to present, "Music: A Way to God." The outreach drew Italians to church, and Europe groups have continued preparing concerts ever since.

Coach Goetsch and his groups routinely assist children's ministries. In summer 2026, Romania participants look forward to supporting day camps hosted by missionaries Mr. and Mrs. Brent George in the Northwest and Mr. and Mrs. Ruben Cristenau of San Mini. "We have Bible lessons, memory verses, songs, games, crafts, all with one goal: to reach boys and girls for Jesus Christ," Coach Goetsch shared.



SEEING SOULS SAVED

Since 2005, YOM groups have helped spread the gospel to tens of thousands of people. "It is most rewarding to see people put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ," Coach Goetsch said. "We have reached kids from Orthodox homes in Romania that only know 'being good' as their way to heaven."

Sometimes leaders experience difficulties while traveling, but the importance of telling others about Christ inspires resilience. "The reality of missions involves long flights, navigating international customs, early mornings and late nights, working across language and cultural barriers, and sometimes staying in more primitive accommodations than we are accustomed to," Dr. Hartkopf observed. "I

have never regretted a single sacrifice of time or resources made in the service of the gospel. It may not be easy or comfortable, but it is always worth it."

Leaders play a part in giving undergraduates rewarding experiences that motivate repeat visits. After visiting Europe in 2024, Vasco Montgomery returned the following year and spent three months serving with missionary Didier Silberstein. "Because of the relationships I built from the trip, I was able to spend the entire summer of 2025 in France serving with Mr. Silberstein," Vasco said.

Some students even uncover calls to ministry through these faculty-led trips. "The Fulfers pushed us to learn new things, to get out of our comfort zones, and to grow," shared Joseph Schmidt (*Sr., AL*), who traveled to Manila in 2025. "Spending time with other Christians there has opened my eyes to ministry opportunities, and God has used my time in the Philippines to direct me toward vocational missions."

SHARING THE VISION

Each undergraduate influenced by faculty on mission can continue sharing their love for evangelism, whether by serving on the field, giving financially, or by praying. Many gather on campus and lift up the cause before God at Mission Prayer Band, a group led by Dr. Bucy, and student leaders share Missions Minute announcements in college chapel services.

For Meg Swank (*Sr., MI*), traveling to Europe helped her deeply appreciate the importance of reaching others for Christ. Now she prompts her classmates to also join YOM teams. "I would encourage every student to go on a missions trip," Meg shared. "Dr. Hartkopf had such a visible heart for each of the ministries we connected with, and Dr. Alvarez was deeply burdened for souls," she recalled. "We can partner with those ministries and create opportunities to share the gospel."

Being involved in YOM trips gives many young people a vision for gospel outreach, and they go on to serve the Lord in countless ways. "Some students discover a calling to full-time vocational missions through these experiences," Dr. Hartkopf shared. "Even those who do not return build a lasting burden to pray for, support, and stay connected to missionaries around the world." 🌟



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Students proudly carry flags in the Parade of Nations.



“ONLY JESUS” FOR EVERY CULTURE

International students represent their countries and share what Campus Church’s Missions Conference meant to them. Read about it here:

pcci.edu/OnlyJesus

PARADE OF NATIONS

November 13, 2025



Students in CS 131 learn computer hardware fundamentals.



HELPING THE HOMELESS IN HONOLULU

Using his computer science degree from PCC, Eddie is able to help lead others to Christ through service. Read about how he uses his skills to help River of Life Mission in Hawaii:

pcci.edu/EddieHabal

EDDIE HABAL

March 19, 2026



Students enjoy free coffee during Greek Week



SHOWCASING STUDENT LEADERSHIP

During Greek Week, students celebrate the PCC college community through an unforgettable week of events. Discover what activities students participated in here:

pcci.edu/GreekWeek26

GREEK WEEK

March 26, 2026

Influencing the World

An important part of Christian education is learning how to be a light for Christ in the community, and Pensacola Christian College students are given several opportunities to serve through different programs. Many students participate in these opportunities, and some even create their own. Here are a few examples of students who served their communities this year.



**LEE
ROLSTON**

Sophomore pastoral ministries student Lee Rolston (KY) traveled to Honduras during Christmas break and was able to help his parents' outreach ministry. Part of his outreach included a soccer camp for the children of the community. "We presented the gospel to them nearly every day of the week," he shared. Fifteen of the attendees that week accepted Christ as their Savior. The highlight of his Christmas break included seeing the baptism of Dennis, a young man they had all been praying for. "It was amazing to hear how God changed his life from one bound by sin to one that is now flourishing in his walk with Christ," Lee said.



**COLTON RADCLIFF &
MICHAEL MERCADANTE**

Graduate students Colton Radcliff (IN) and Michael Mercadante (NJ) worked together to create the children's book *Did You Notice Otis Today?* Inspired by a plush otter living in the Teen Extreme camp office, Colton decided to write a children's story. "The purpose [of this story] is to inspire the reader to explore the world God has created," he shared. Because of his experience in graphic design, Michael agreed to illustrate the book. "My goal as an illustrator is to make sure stories can come to life in a fun and engaging way for young children," Michael said. Colton and Michael hope *Did You Notice Otis Today?* can encourage a love for reading and a sense of adventure in young readers.



**EVAN
SWIATKOWSKI**

As a junior history student, Evan Swiatkowski (NJ) serves the Pensacola community by volunteering at the Naval Aviation Museum. He helps research and archive information and documents, as well as leads tours for children's groups visiting the museum. Evan hopes his Christian testimony can help reach others. "As I strive to give my best effort, I hope and pray that it reflects PCC's values of education, principles, and Christianity," he shared. His work has allowed him to intern at the General Henry Knox Museum in Maine, furthering his reach in different communities.



GRACE HERR

During Christmas break, senior nursing student Grace Herr (PA) decided she wanted to be a blessing to her community. On Christmas Eve, Grace, her mom, and her brother volunteered to help spread Christmas cheer at the Baltimore Rescue Mission. “We got to organize some things and sing carols with the men and women,” she shared. “It was such a wonderful time! We loved hearing how [the mission] started and how the ministry has grown throughout the years! We are so thankful for the time we got to spend serving there.”



GEOVANY HERNANDEZ

As a product designer, graphic design student Geovany Hernandez (Sr., Honduras) pays close attention to trends and art styles in his field. One art style, ASCII, uses numbers and symbols to create shapes and patterns. “As I started exploring ASCII, I realized there is a significant gap in accessible, user-friendly tools for designers to use,” he said. To solve this problem, he created Gridform, a web-based pattern generator that lets users create custom ASCII art. Geovany received the 2026 Graphic Design Excellence award for his innovative program.



DAISY WALKER

Senior special education student Daisy Walker (FL) helps lead Miracle League, a PCC student-led outreach program. Through this ministry, students are able to help countless special needs individuals through the joy of sports. Daisy, who has been a part of Miracle League outreach since before her time as a college student, has immensely enjoyed the opportunity to help the Pensacola community. “As a senior, I look back on my time with the Miracle League Christian Service, and I’m so grateful to serve with them. God has given me such amazing opportunities to lead and mentor others.”



CONNOR ROSEMAN

Senior management student Connor Roseman (PA) has been able to intern at several companies over the past two years, influencing multiple communities for Christ. “As a consulting intern with Aquatic Environment Consultants, I supported water treatment projects by testing water quality and assisting with chemical applications,” he said. “I then built on my experience as a staffing intern at Martin’s Famous Potato Rolls and Bread, where I conducted interviews, managed candidate pipelines, helped run job fairs, and led onboarding for new hires.” This summer, he has the opportunity to intern at Keyence working with innovative technology.



LYDIA PALLIVATHUKAL

Senior pre-medicine student Lydia Pallivathukal (TX) serves the PCC student community by working with the Pre-Health Club. The College’s Pre-Health Club offers a space for pre-med students to get together and learn about job opportunities, as well as meet others in their program. “I personally wanted to get involved with this club because of the impact it made in my life as a pre-med student,” Lydia shared. “One of my personal goals for the Pre-Health Club is that it will encourage students to remember why they chose the medical field and teach them to persevere.”



LIAM GERDTS

As a member of the men’s Eagles basketball team, senior youth ministries student Liam Gerdts (TX) uses his talents to reach others for Christ. Last summer, he was given the opportunity to work with campers at NEXT Summer Camp. “I was able to not only coach younger athletes but also develop a friendship with them,” he said. Liam is also the leader of the Brentwood Basketball Ministry Christian Service. Because of his heart for others, he received the Pete Maravich Award, the highest achievement a player can receive. This award is given to a player with excellent character and athletic success.

EMBEDDED IN THE MISSION: A CHAPLAIN'S CALL TO INFLUENCE



MIKE LOPEZ

The rain poured down as I pressed my hands into the sharp white gravel, reopening old wounds from the week and staining the stones red with my blood. “One, two, three—four-one! One, two, three—four-two!” barked the Air Assault Sergeant, putting us through yet another grueling smoke session. This was Air Assault School; the Army’s infamous “10 toughest days,” where attrition chisels classes down to just 45–55% survivors. It’s certainly not the hardest Army course out there, but it’s also not for the faint of heart.

As the only chaplain in the class, I stood out. During weapons PT, they handed me a sledgehammer instead of a rifle (chaplains are non-combatants). The cross on my uniform marks me further. Midway through, after a brutal exam, a few soldiers gathered around me. “Chaplain, why endure this?” they asked, noting that chaplains don’t sling-load helicopters or inspect combat rigs, so why go through the pain. At the time, I was 39 years old, and it was obvious I was the “old guy” in the group.

My answer was simple: “Chaplains do their best to embed with units to be where soldiers are. If we’re trained like you, we can be with you without getting in the way. It opens doors to join you in the fight.” Their eyes were curious. “So you’re suffering all this just to be near us in combat?” one pressed. I nodded. “You got it.” Grins broke out: “Bet!”

By God’s grace, I graduated—with lasting injuries as souvenirs. But the real lesson here goes beyond my experience. My role as an Army chaplain mirrors every Christian’s calling on earth. Consider the parallel: Christ, the eternal Creator, embedded Himself in a broken world. He didn’t observe from afar; He became flesh, dwelling among sinners (*John 1:14*). He shared our frailties, endured our pains, and culminated in the ultimate suffering—His sacrificial death on the cross for the redemption of all humanity.

This incarnation reveals a divine strategy for us as Christians: influence flows from presence. In fact, that’s the Army chaplain’s game plan: ministry of presence. God stamps His image on every human (*Genesis 1:27*), granting inherent dignity that transcends divides. In a polarized world, politically, socially, spiritually, true influence isn’t necessarily about grand gestures but daily embedding. We’re placed in our corners of the globe not by chance, but by providence (*Acts 17:26*). Whether in barracks, neighborhoods, or global communities, we’re called to bear Christ’s light through loving engagement and presence.

As Christians, we embody this. Army chaplaincy has taught me that showing up—bloodied hands and all—builds bridges. It’s in the small acts: listening to a soldier’s burdens, offering prayer amid chaos, acknowledging dignity in the overlooked. Loving neighbors as Christ loved us (*John 13:34*) influences profoundly, drawing others to Him.

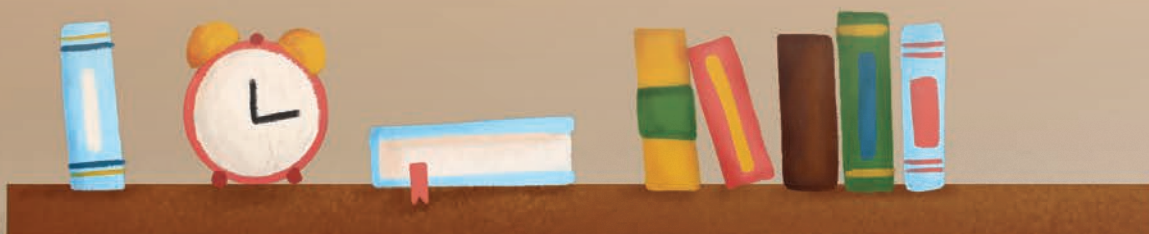
So, wherever God deploys you, embed deeply. Suffer alongside, serve humbly, and watch influence ripple outward. In Christ’s economy, proximity often precedes transformation. Your presence might just spark someone’s longing to know more about the One who created them. ▾



CH (CPT) Mike Lopez (*Pastoral Ministries '09, M.Div. '15, Ed.S. Educational Leadership '19, Ed.D. Educational Leadership '26*) has been serving U.S. Army troops since 2023. After graduating with his undergraduate degree from Pensacola Christian College, Lopez traveled for the College as a representative, served as a residence manager, and then supported Campus Church as a coordinator. Previously an administrator at Greenville Christian Academy for almost a decade with his wife Amy (*Elementary Education '07*), Lopez was called to join the military as a chaplain and has found a rewarding ministry there. Mike and Amy have three beautiful daughters: Elena, Aurora, and Ania.

STORIES OF EVERYDAY FAITHFULNESS

WHAT IF A STORY YOU KNOW IS EXACTLY
WHAT SOMEONE IS WAITING TO HEAR?



Our lives are a collection of stories woven together, connecting us with a single thread: the mission to influence the world for Christ. And what makes an eternal difference is not only found in the most confident voice, visionary leadership, or even brilliant mind in a lab. It can be noticed in the everyday faithfulness of those serving quietly.

Those individuals are all around us.

Is it your spouse? An acquaintance on social media? Someone you know at church?

What are they joyfully doing day after day that is making an eternal difference?

Tell us their story so they can be potentially featured in a spotlight or testimonial!



Scan the QR code to share the story the world needs to hear!

When we retell how someone's testimony has touched a life or hear about lives being transformed for Christ, the story could become the moment someone realizes what God is calling them to do.



DR. BARRY WALKER

ASSISTANT TEACHING PROFESSOR, *CRIMINAL JUSTICE*

Criminal justice professor Dr. Barry Walker is passionate about preparing students to defend society's freedom and stability. After a successful law enforcement career in Ohio, he enjoys combining his expertise with his faith to support rising leaders at PCC.

BECOMING A PCC INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Walker worked in Ohio law enforcement for 26 years, during 15 of which he also taught at a local university. Eventually his children enrolled at Pensacola Christian College, and when visiting them, he learned about a criminal justice job opening from then-faculty member Mr. John Heckel. "He sat down with me and talked to me about the calling. After I prayed and talked with important people in my life, I decided to apply," Dr. Walker shared.

During the interview process, Dr. Walker attended one of the daily chapel services on campus. The message highlighted the importance of passing down the knowledge of God to younger people and referenced Psalm 145:4: "One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts." As he listened, Dr. Walker related the verse to education, realizing that being an instructor at the College would enable him to equip the next generation to honor God in their careers. "PCC is about more than teaching academics," Dr. Walker explained. "We are declaring the mighty acts of God in our lives. I can declare His mighty works by demonstrating how criminal justice students can make a difference." When PCC offered Dr. Walker the job, he accepted with confidence.

IMPARTING KNOWLEDGE WITH EXCELLENCE

Looking back, Dr. Walker sees that the Lord prepared him for his work through his previous experiences and his higher education from other universities. "God allowed me to get training in almost every topic we teach," Dr. Walker shared. "Courses that I took as part of my police training, opportunities to get a masters, and experience at the police department put me in a position to make this transition."

Dr. Walker has imparted knowledge with excellence since 2015, teaching classes ranging from Theory of Patrol and Basic Criminal Investigation to Criminal Justice Ethics. Through his lectures, Dr. Walker shares lessons from his career to help students with practical application. "Textbooks are often filled with studies and third-hand experiences. I can put meat on the bones of these theories. I had a broad level of experience, so talking about administration is as easy as talking about patrol tactics," he shared.

In his free time, Dr. Walker works with local organizations to keep Pensacola safe. He helps the homeless at Waterfront Rescue Mission, assists groups like FREE International which combat human trafficking, and partners with the Be Ready Alliance Coordinating for Emergencies (BRACE) to equip residents for hurricanes. "Through BRACE, I have been able to help the community prepare for a major disaster," Dr. Walker explained, "I help train Community Emergency Response Teams a couple of times a year. This program can be utilized when first responders are overwhelmed, which is often the case in hurricanes."

THE SECOND PAYCHECK

While Dr. Walker enjoys leading classes and serving Pensacola, most of all he appreciates knowing that his work has lasting fruit. When he learns how PCC criminal justice graduates are keeping society safe and secure while being Christian witnesses, he is grateful he had a part in preparing them through teaching.

"The best part of working with the students is seeing the improvement and getting to see them walk across the stage at graduation. This is what we call 'the second paycheck,'" Dr. Walker shared. "We hear back from them on their successes: marriage, jobs, promotions, awards, and families being built. I love knowing that this is bigger than me. I did my part to build the Kingdom and influence the world through students that will be doing these jobs for years to come."



MRS. SARAH KAISER

ASSOCIATE INSTRUCTOR, *BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION*

Known for her expertise in finance, business, and real estate, instructor and local Realtor Mrs. Sarah Kaiser (*Management; Finance '12, Master of Business Administration '14*) understands the importance of stewardship. When she first came to PCC to earn her bachelor's degrees, she never imagined that one day she would become a faculty member at her alma mater. Now she invests deeply in her students, teaching them to manage their resources to glorify God.

A SURPRISING CAREER PATH

After graduating with concentrations in management and finance, Mrs. Kaiser planned to begin a career in financial advising. But she discovered a passion for education while working as a graduate teaching assistant and pursuing her Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.). "Before I chose to teach, I was on track to be an advisor at a well-known brokerage—my dream job since high school," Mrs. Kaiser recalled. "I had the opportunity to teach while getting my M.B.A. and fell in love with it immediately."

Mrs. Kaiser became a faculty member two years after completing her graduate degree. Her extensive knowledge helps her communicate big picture concepts in courses like Introduction to Economics, Principles of Management, and Business Communications. "I double majored in management and finance which allowed me to take a wide range of classes that most of my students now take," Mrs. Kaiser shared. "It enabled me to now 'connect the dots,' so to speak, for them to see how what they've learned or will learn in other classes is applicable to what we are learning and practicing in our course."

TEACHING STEWARDSHIP


Following her busy days in the classroom, Mrs. Kaiser works as a Realtor in the evenings. Her real estate expertise compliments her financial knowledge, allowing her to teach students godly resource management with examples and stories. "Students appreciate seeing how classroom concepts operate in real life, whether discussing housing markets, decision-making, ethics, or stewardship. It gives credibility to discussions about responsibility, integrity, and service in the workplace," Mrs. Kaiser shared.

Mrs. Kaiser has also observed that sharing her career experience makes her classes even more practical for undergraduates because many plan

to buy or invest in housing. "I've found that most everyone loves real estate; therefore, when I can share or illustrate a concept or topic in terms of houses or property, they seem to not only enjoy it but also learn from it," Mrs. Kaiser noted.

THE GREATEST INVESTMENT

Since becoming a PCC educator, Mrs. Kaiser has enriched students' lives by sharing finance, management, and real estate insight. It gives her joy each time graduates go on to glorify Christ through lives of godly stewardship, knowing that her teaching helped them to build bright futures.

"I still stay connected to a few students who have gone on and done exactly what they dreamed and worked on doing as college students. I cannot even begin to share how proud I am of them and what they have accomplished in their lives," Mrs. Kaiser shared. "People are the greatest investment you can make." 



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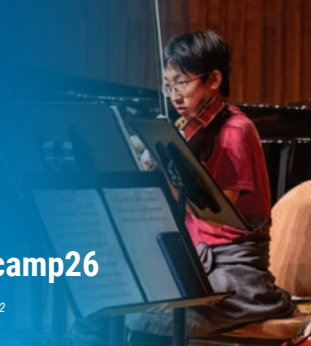
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UPCOMING EVENTS

SUMMER 2026

Teen Extreme Youth Camps

Check TeenExtremeCamp.com for dates!

NEXT Summer Camps

Check NextSummerCamps.com for dates!

AUGUST/ SEPTEMBER

30-2 Opening Convocation

This fall, join us as Dr. Scott Pauley sets the tone for the new semester by sharing encouraging and challenging truths from God's Word.

OCTOBER

7-9 College Days

10 Fine Arts Series:
Liberty Voices

23-24 Alumni Homecoming

Reminisce with old friends on the campus where it all started. Register at start.pcci.edu/2026Homecoming

30 Explore PCC

NOVEMBER

19-21 Fine Arts Series:
Comedy of Errors

DECEMBER

1 Christmas Lights Celebration



WATCH PCC

Visit watch.pcci.edu

or watch via

Roku Apple TV Google TV YouTube

Tourists and locals alike are waved into the city by the new Pensacola Pelican Welcome sign, designed by PCC alumna Briana Spence.



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