



Dani's Story: My Journey to Faith



Staff and students who attended the Southwestern Ontario Winter Retreat! Students from Windsor, Western, Waterloo, Laurier, Guelph, McMaster, and Brock attended.

At the winter retreat this past January, students were invited to discover renewed ways of engaging with God in prayer, and to experience the profound presence of God's Spirit. There are many stories that I could share of students encountering God's living presence at the retreat, but one story in particular stands out to me: Dani's story. A third year student from Guelph who made the decision to follow Jesus at the retreat! I asked Dani to share a bit of her story, and to describe what happened for her at the winter retreat. This is what she said:

"I had a really good time at the retreat! We talked about the Holy Spirit a lot (who is someone I never really thought about), we spent time in worship, and in general had a lot of discussion about God and Christian community. On Sunday morning, I sat down to breakfast, with the plan to eat and run before the final session began. Ian, one of the speakers at the retreat, and another student, sat down beside me and began talking. I didn't want to talk, but since they soon started talking about travel and different countries, I knew I had to listen, since I love hearing travel stories! As they continued to talk, Ian asked the student what his story was to finding faith in Jesus. At this point, I felt it was my time to go, since that's such a personal thing to share, and I didn't want to be involved... but my food wasn't done yet. So I silently listened in. Once he finished talking I was about to get up to clean my dishes, but then Ian turned to me, and asked the same question, "What's your story?". Uh oh. Although I was quite scared to talk about this, I shared how I had recently been exploring Christianity, attending Bible studies since October, and my journey towards believing that God is real.

After I finished, Ian asked "Have you given your life to God?". I thought about and said, "Well, no, I don't think I have. But I would like to!". So Ian lead me in a prayer, and I responded out loud in prayer, which was both scary and new for me! I couldn't help but cry. I it felt like I was a completely different person, so much lighter in that instant, but at the same time still Dani. So there it was.. I gave my life to God!"

Amazing, eh?! It's been a joy to see Dani's involvement in InterVarsity grow over the past several months, and see the ways she is now responding to Jesus' leading in her life. Please be praying for Dani as she discovers what it means to walk with Jesus daily. She has so much joy and is hungry to learn as much as she can about faith and scripture. Please also pray for the fellowship in Guelph, as we walk alongside of her in this new journey.



We learn a new praise song in Malayalam led by Windsor students.



Students gather in small groups during the Winter Retreat.

Leading Through Growth

It may still be winter, but it feels like spring on campus! Buds are blooming in the lives of students. Growth is all around us. Kingdom seeds are being planted.

Ever since the winter retreat, I've had numerous significant discussions with the student leaders in Guelph about how to grow in our ability to become a thriving witnessing community on campus. Many of these conversations being initiated by the student leaders themselves. They are a group who are eagerly looking forward to creating more spaces to engage their not-yet-believing peers in a loving community and in faith inspired conversation and discussion. They have been encouraged and inspired by the turnout of not-yet-believing students to Campus Alpha, which InterVarsity in Guelph is co-hosting with other Christian clubs on campus.

Due to the growth in numbers we're regularly seeing out at InterVarsity Guelph events, we have been forced to reevaluate how we are welcoming and caring for these students. It's such a great challenge to have! In some cases, it feels like we've outgrown our current ministry format, and so we are now considering how to faithfully disciple and lead the students in the fellowship, in the midst of this growth. What a joy it has been to see so many students at various walks in their faith journey join us in weekly scripture study, discussion, and large group fellowship.

The InterVarsity fellowship in Guelph is currently in the midst of student leader applications for the 2018/2019 academic year. We are considering how to invite new students onto the core executive team, as well as invite additional students to serve and lead in more focused ways within the fellowship. We have many students who long to serve, and we want to be able to invite more of these students take a closer step in. As we navigate the growth our fellowship has been experiencing, we are considering new and innovative ways more students who call InterVarsity Guelph 'home' would be able to use their gifts and abilities to bless and grow the ministry on campus.

To God be the glory!

Coming Up...

There are lots of exciting opportunities for students coming up in the next several months. Please be praying for students as they consider these. Here's a sneak peak:

Urbana '18 | Even though Urbana '18 isn't until December 2018, registration opens March 1st, and we have begun inviting students to consider attending! *December 27-31, 2018.*

Student Leader Training (Guelph) | Students who have been chosen to serve on the 2018/2019 Student Leader Team at Guelph will gather for training, team building, and planning. *Mid-April 2018.*

MarkCentral | Registration for MarkCentral opens March 1st. This 7-day scripture study into the Gospel of Mark is always a highlight in campus ministry. *April 30 - May 6.*

Personal Update



Arya is studying up on what it's going to be like to welcome a new baby into our family!

Our family has exciting news to share! Chris & I are expecting our second child in June 2018! We are thrilled about this, and Arya is getting excited about the new baby in mommy's belly.

I will be in touch with you in the spring, with details about maternity leave, and who will be caring for the InterVarsity fellowship in Guelph while I'm away.

Prayer Requests

Please pray for...

...the students who are considering applying to serve on student leadership during the 2018/2019 academic year. Pray also for the current student leaders who will be meeting with, and interviewing, these applicants. Pray for wisdom and discernment for all these students as they consider this decision.

...the students who attended the Winter Retreat. Give thanks for the ways God worked in their hearts and minds during the retreat, and the ways they are responding to God.

...students as they are entering midterm season. Pray for peace and focus as they study, and pray that they won't lose sight of what God is doing in their lives during this season. Pray that students will feel rested and restored as they return back to school from Reading Week (Feb 19-23).

...our family as we prepare for and anticipate the arrival of baby #2. Pray for continued health and good growth for this new little baby.



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