

CHARLOTTE RAKESTRAW

Social Media & Correspondence Coordinator
Tallahassee, FL

BACKGROUND I was born into and raised in GCI. My dad is the minister of the Tallahassee congregation, and growing up every member of the family automatically participated in the ministry and weekly services in one way or another. It wasn't until I moved away for college that I grew to understand and appreciate GCI. I lived in the middle of West Palm Beach for four years, and while it was a paradise by all other standards, I was missing my church family and support system. Since graduating and moving back home, I made a point to get to know the members of my congregation and they really are all like family to me. Getting to really know everyone and their personal struggles and prayer requests has given me a heart for GCI ministry that I didn't have before, because it is personal. Knowing the church is made up of real, imperfect, loving people has kept me coming back for more, and eager to invite others. This is my family, and I have a place at the table, and I want others to feel as included as I do.



Get to Know Charlotte

Must see places in my hometown:

If you come to Tallahassee, you have to visit the state capitol and ride the elevator to the 22nd floor. You will be able to see the entire city, it's the closest thing to mountains we have.

Florida State University's campus is beautiful as well, and if you are a college football fan, you should check out the stadium.



Wakulla Springs, Lake Ella, St. Mark's National Wildlife Preserve, and Cascades Park are a few other nearby noteworthy hangouts.

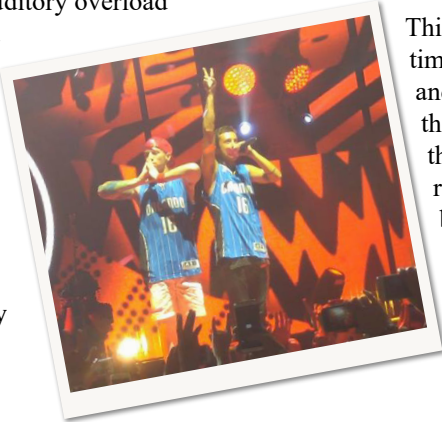
Q&A

When do you feel closest to God?

In unexpected moments. I am not much of a silent meditator, but I do love listening to music, and taking walks. I connect deeply with song lyrics, or sometimes just the beauty of the sound is a spiritual experience to me, this auditory overload is one way that I experience God.

What energizes you?

Intentional time with friends energizes me. I really enjoy group bonding and creative thinking, so if I can get people together for a game night or go out with a group for dinner and quality conversation, I am usually the best, most alive version of myself.



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What does hope look like for you in your life right now?

In my life, hope looks different to me every day. Sometimes it comes in the form of lyrics that remind me I'm not alone in my feelings. Other days it is a gorgeous fluffy pink Tallahassee sunset.

I find it in opportunities to impact change, like offering time or donations to aid in relief efforts, and career opportunities like my new position here at GCI.

FAVORITES

Scripture: Romans 8:38-39

Words to Live By:

Think of all the beauty still left around you and be happy. — Anne Frank

Song:

Kitchen Sink — Twenty One Pilots
(I saw them perform last year!)

This job came at a very hopeless time in my life, and having friends and mentors reflect the qualities they see in me, and then turn those into opportunities and a renewed sense of purpose, has been a huge hope-bringing blessing for me this year. That leads me to, perhaps, the last form of hope in my life, people.

Being able to connect with those around me in deep meaningful ways brings me hope more than anything. It's too easy to be blind to the goodness in the world, but it's always there, and when I see it and experience it, especially in the kindness and care I receive from friends and family, and the bridges and bonds I make with strangers, I am rewarded with an abundant hope.

