

SARAH ROSSI

GCNext Leader
Waltham, Massachusetts

Background:

How do you serve in GCI? I am part of the GCNext team, which is a group of young adult leaders from around the USA who are being equipped and empowered to participate in ministry by leading GCIgnite and other regional initiatives. In my local congregation, I am a member of the Advisory Council and am the youth field trip coordinator. **How did you connect with GCI?** When I was a junior at Tufts University in 2016, I connected with Cara Garrity, a Tufts alum and a (now former) GCI Intern, through mutual friends. I had been having a lot of theological questions and issues with the mainstream evangelical church and was searching for a church community that delved deep into theology, emphasized the humanity of Jesus, and studied the implications of our theology into our daily lives. After building a relationship with Cara and connecting to Pastor Dishon Mills, I knew I had found my new church home at Grace Christian Church in Waltham, Massachusetts! **What are some of your reasons for choosing to participate with GCI in ministry?** When you are part of a small congregation, you feel very invested in the inner workings of the church. Almost everyone in my congregation serves in some capacity, and I understand why; it's just a natural transition as you become a member! As opposed to serving because I feel I must, I serve because I want to spend more time with my church family. In regard to my participation with the national GCNext team, I decided to do so because I believe that God has been preparing me for something like this through my past experiences. I continue to trust in his building process because I see how parts of my past have provided the groundwork for connecting with and serving others. **Who has invested in you to support you in your ministry?** Before I connected with GCI, I was on the visioning and planning team for my college ministry, the Non-denominational Christian Fellowship. Many upperclassmen and adults poured into me as I was seeking to become a better leader. Even though that ministry experience was difficult, I will always be thankful for the experience and those who invested in me. Since then, Cara Garrity and Dishon Mills have been key pillars to my faith journey and my participation in ministry. It's so easy to follow them, as they are truly leaders that seek God's heart. Mako Nagasawa and his ministry have also inspired me greatly, igniting my interest to understand church history, theology, and the implications with social justice. **If you could describe your congregation in one sentence, what would you say?** A small but mighty force of loving humans from diverse backgrounds, who are always seeking to learn more about God and themselves. **Is there something unique about your church services that connects with your community?** Something that is unique about our church is that we are mostly a commuter church (myself and many others commute at least an hour each way). While many may see this as a negative aspect to connecting with our community, I actually think this has compelled us to be intentional with our connections. We know for a fact that if we just focused on our Sunday services, Waltham would not know that we exist. Because of that, we have built relationships with community partners, resulting in events such as our Kaleidoscope Festival. We have learned that God can work through all types of congregations in unique ways, and so I encourage others to look to what's unique about their community and congregation and to build from there, not just to take what has worked for someone else.



Get to Know Sarah

I'M MOST GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITIES I WAS GIVEN FROM MY FAMILY. THEIR BELIEF IN ME ALLOWED ME TO RECEIVE A WONDERFUL EDUCATION, PARTICIPATE IN MANY EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AS A YOUTH, ENGAGE WITH MY COMMUNITY, AND MAKE THE CHOICE, WITHOUT ANY PRESSURE, TO PURSUE A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. I RECOGNIZE THAT I EXPERIENCED QUITE A BIT OF PRIVILEGE AND I AM WHERE I AM TODAY BECAUSE OF THE PEOPLE IN MY LIFE.



1. Struggle or life lesson you would like to share: I used to believe that God was only present in the "holy moments" of life and felt guilty for spending time on things that didn't check off this box. Once I realized that God is present everywhere and among everyone, it gave life much more joyous meaning. The passions that I have, whether that be public health, travel, or Zumba, are all part of God's creation, and He delights in my participation in His creation. Holiness is not as black and white as we may believe, but it is defined by our personal relationship with God.

2. What is one of your greatest accomplishments? I will always be proud of my bravery in choosing to study abroad in Ecuador for 8 months in 2017. Not only am I proud of the choice, but of how much I pushed myself out of my comfort zone to immerse myself in a completely different culture. During one of my many weekend hiking adventures, I had a moment when I reached the 12,841-foot peak of a volcano crater. I took a breath (or whatever was left of it with the altitude) and was astonished where I was. I never had labeled myself as a "hiking person," but I quickly adapted upon arrival to the country because I knew that experiencing this nature firsthand was integral to understanding how God lives in the people of Ecuador. This lesson has been essential to how I connect with people from different backgrounds; you need to walk a mile (or 7) in someone else's shoes to better understand them.



THOSE WHO LOOK TO HIM ARE RADIANT; THEIR FACES ARE NEVER COVERED WITH SHAME.
– PSALM 34:5