

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

JOVANNY SOTO

Meet Jovanny Soto, U of A Junior, accounting major and long-time United Methodist! Jovanny joined our ministry in fall of 2017 when he moved into our Wesley dorm. It took him no time to get plugged in at Wesley, joining our worship band as a bass player and eventually being selected for our leadership team in the GROW area.

Jovanny is a passionate student with a heart for the Lord. His journey with Christ began with his home church, Grace United Methodist Church in Rogers, where Jovanny assumed responsibility for leading his youth group at age 15. Grace UMC is a congregation that reaches a diverse audience through their English and Spanish language services each Sunday. Jovanny, who is bilingual, has been deeply involved in the church's life at every level. For the past two years, Jovanny has served as the church's delegate to the Arkansas Annual Conference. This spring, Jovanny has taken the lead in an effort to get more people involved in the church's ministry. Jovanny will help lead a lay leadership course to deepen members' understanding of the Christian faith, the United Methodist church, the mission of the church, and why each individual is needed to serve. "We want everyone to feel empowered to serve the church. I hope through this course, we will grow more disciples and inspire church members to serve in missions and leadership," shared Jovanny.

In addition to his dedication to Grace UMC, Jovanny serves faithfully here at Wesley. As a part of the GROW team at Wesley, Jovanny is working hard to see that our students are continually maturing in their faith through discipleship opportunities. One of the ways he is excited to do this is by challenging students to take a deeper look at the Scriptures and how the Word can influence their lives daily. Jovanny expressed, "My goal for this semester is to help every student know why they are important for the Kingdom of God here on campus."

As a part of our leadership team, Jovanny was also elected by his peers on the team to serve as a student representative to Wesley's Advisory Council. For Jovanny, who is discerning a call to pastoral ministry, this role gives him a wonderful opportunity to be exposed to the administrative and financial oversight needed for any healthy ministry and to gain valuable insight into the behind the scenes functions and structures that set any church or ministry up for success.

Jovanny just returned from a trip to visit Duke Divinity School, sponsored by the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas, to take a look at their seminary programs. It was one more step in the process of discernment, as Jovanny continues to seek God's will for his life. Young but mighty, Jovanny is an incredible example of how God is at work to shape and mold young adult leaders both for the present and the future of the church.

