

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

NICK IRBY



Meet Nick Irby, U of A Finance graduate student and active member at Wesley! Nick found our ministry in spring of 2014 through Central United Methodist Church in Fayetteville.

Growing up in Artesia, New Mexico, Nick attended a small Pentecostal church, where his faith journey began. Being brought up in the church, Nick felt his approach to Christianity was mostly out of obligation and fear of what would happen to him if he was a nonbeliever. Similar to many college students, Nick shared, "I don't think I truly considered the motivations for my faith until I went to college."

Starting his journey at the U of A in fall of 2014, Nick began to analyze the way he approached his faith, realizing he viewed God as a cold-hearted judge ready to punish any little misstep. With a desire to know more of God's character and in search of a loving Heavenly Father, Nick began to seek his faith in a new way. Life as a graduate student can be extremely busy, but making the time to attend Tuesday night Dinner & Worship, Grad Student Lunch, and Thursday night Bible Study has been crucial for Nick to find time in community to ask questions and get to know God better. "I love being able to apply a more academic approach to the Bible and discuss passages in depth with my peers," Nick expressed. "Through studying Scripture, I have come

to know God as the Father and the Shepherd, which has been the biggest change in my spiritual outlook I've experienced while at Wesley."

Here at Wesley, we seek to help students take ownership of their faith, accompanying them as they do the hard work of exploring the Christian witness, studying the Scriptures, and discerning what it means to be a true and faithful follower of Christ. In an academic and social environment where many diverse worldviews, both secular and religious, are readily expounded and promoted, it is important for students to have a safe space for honest engagement and dialogue with the Christian faith. This is the kind of conversation, accompaniment, and encouragement Nick found at Wesley. "Everyday I ask myself, am I serving out of a desire for God or obligation?" shared Nick. "I've definitely become better at discerning the difference between the two while here at Wesley."

Nick hopes to graduate in the spring of 2019, heading towards an academic position where he will take his newfound approach to faith with him. When asked what Wesley has meant to him, Nick reflected, "Wesley is definitely a place where the care extends beyond you as a Christian and as a church member, but as a complete person. It's a place where I can connect with people and explore what faith in God means to me."