

GRAD STUDENT LUNCH

Our desire at Wesley to reach and minister broadly to the diversity of students here at the U of A has taken new expression this year. This past fall, we launched a ministry specifically geared towards giving graduate students at the University of Arkansas a place of Christian community and connection. While there are many ministries that successfully engage undergraduate students on our campus, not many make a focused effort to minister to the needs of graduate-level students. We believe that this older and more diverse graduate student population is in a unique stage that sets them apart from their undergraduate peers and, therefore, need a community that speaks to their differing life experience.

Each Thursday at the Union, our graduate ministry gathers to share in a fellowship meal, devotional, and prayer time together. Led by our Pastoral Intern, Taylor Loy, our Graduate Student Lunch allows students to engage in meaningful conversations and make connections with other graduate students across disciplines. Since its launch, we have welcomed 25 different faces at our Grad Lunch, with a regular attendance of a dozen students each week. We love nurturing a community that lends support and encouragement to students in very difficult academic programs and helps graduate students pursue their relationship with Christ, even as they pursue further education.

"When I started my graduate program at the U of A, I knew that I wanted this chapter to be different than my undergraduate experience," shared Karli Moore, a first-year graduate student. "Through this welcoming and edifying ministry, I have found a faith community to call home for the first time since leaving my hometown. I feel like I have really grown in my faith here at Wesley by being challenged to embrace vulnerability and develop strong, Christ-filled relationships."

Our Thursday Graduate Student Lunch has also served as a portal into our broader ministry's life, as graduate students involved in Grad Lunch have also become avid participants in our weekly worship service at Wesley.

We believe every student at the U of A deserves an opportunity to be a part of a supportive faith community, and we want to help students of all ages and stages CONNECT, GROW and BEAR FRUIT in their life in Christ during their time at the university. We are excited to see how our graduate student community grows in the coming semesters as we continue to walk with these students as they walk with Christ and one another.

