

MEET PTS



For the past 20 years, the **Miller Summer Youth Institute at PTS** has helped students entering their senior year of high school or first year of college discern their spiritual gifts and vocational call. Through Bible and theology studies, community service, fellowship, and discussion, the program has provided young people with a community in which wrestling with questions about faith and God is welcomed—specifically, big questions, such as “Who is God calling me to be?” and “What is God calling me to do?”

Kelcey Bailey’s journey of faith has been deeply rooted in the SYI community and mindset for eight years. “When I first came as a high-school scholar in 2009, I quickly came to find a home with the other youth and leaders,” she recalls. “My love for the program, and the influence it has had on me, made it an easy decision to return as a college counselor in 2013 and again this past summer as a resident director seminarian. The program has changed in wonderful ways since my first experience in 2009, yet it has never lost sight of its core mission—to help young people see how they can use their gifts to serve others and serve God.” The program not only helped Kelcey when it came to making decisions such as what to college majors to choose, but also, and ultimately, realizing that the questions she wanted to ask are the same questions that people in seminary wrestle with every day. “Just as the SYI program has grown and changed, so I have been shaped by this living and loving community that is SYI,” reflects the now second-year M.Div. student at PTS.

Over the past few years, SYI Directors Erin ’05 and Derek ’05/’17 Davenport (who is also an SYI alum!) have revised the program. Students now have the same opportunity to dig into the questions they have about faith and discernment, but they can also receive transferable college credit for their work. Kelcey explains, “This year we had nine students, either in high school or starting college, who enrolled in 30 hours of church history classes taught by PTS professors at Waynesburg University. Four college interns spent their summer at PTS engaging daily in local ministries and helping prepare for programming.” While the Waynesburg group studied the beginnings of the church, a group of about 20 others, hosted at PTS, focused on mission in Pittsburgh. “Summer 2017 was the first year this new structure was implemented,” says Kelcey. “We had an energetic, innovative, and flexible group of staff that made this ‘test drive’ year an incredible experience!”

Kelcey continues, “It has been exciting to watch the SYI program evolve while staying true to its core focus. The program has always been adaptable to the needs and interests of the different student groups. Now, while high school students are given the opportunity to receive college credit as an introduction to the type of work that may be expected of them in coming years, the college interns are given a deeper opportunity to think about what they want to do after their studies.”

Kelcey looks forward to continuing her walk of faith with the SYI program and community—“and to seeing new students grow in loving the program as I do!”

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