



# COLLEGE *of* ATHENS

## CoA Spring 2023 Newsletter

*Equipping the next generation of Christian leaders to transform the world in Jesus' Name*



### Filling the Empty Place

By design, humans were created as 3-part beings with a body, a soul (mind, will, and emotions), and a spirit. That deepest spiritual place inside of us was designed for God to take up residence through the agency of His Holy Spirit. God's space within us becomes our place of longing.

When we long for fulfilling lives with meaning and purpose, we are operating exactly as we were designed. However, many endeavor to fill the hole in their spirits with trivial, worldly things, and activities that provide little more than a temporary filling of the deep void. A dream

vacation, winning a game, earning a fortune or feasting on your favorite food will bring a measure of joy. But eventually, the deep longing returns.

Much like we feel physical hunger day after day, the unfilled ache for God in the depths of our beings demands to be satisfied. A life disconnected from God renders that life meaningless because it has missed its highest purpose.

The Apostle Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:16-19 outlines the prescription for ultimate satisfaction. "*I pray that out of his glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*" The first step is to willingly invite Christ to indwell us through the Holy Spirit. And through that infilling, we discover the most unrelenting, purest form of love that ever was.

The power that Paul references is the power to choose God's best plan at all times and in all circumstances. Filled with Christ and secure in His love, we become capable of setting aside all forms of self-interest, self-protection, and self-promotion. Motivated by God's love, we find life's greatest meaning by daily choosing to engage in acts that demonstrate His love for others in tangible ways.

Through prayer and His Word, we discover God's perspective about Him, about ourselves, and about all of life. Armed with His perspective, we can choose to engage in selfless acts of service that allow others to discover the only real way to fill their own deep void—with His love.

So if you struggle with an empty feeling that results from unsatisfying pleasures, or if you feel anxious about the meaning of your future, remember, it doesn't have to be that way. Jesus offers a better way. Come near to God and He will come near to you. He will fill the aching void inside of you with immeasurable joy and genuine purpose that is only found in Him!

**By Marcia Wilbur, CoA President**

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## CoA 2023 President's Gala

Thank you to everyone who attended the 2023 President's Gala. We enjoyed excellent food, an inspiring message from Mr. Robert Baxley, former Zaxby's COO, and danced the night away! The purpose of the annual Gala is to raise support for our non-profit college. As the College grows, your support is needed more than ever for [student scholarships](#) and [campus development](#). Please consider becoming a [regular, monthly supporter](#). And be sure to pray about investing in CoA by using [smart charitable giving strategies](#) that can afford you incredible income tax benefits. Thank you for investing in our bright future as we co-labor to build God's Kingdom in our community and beyond!

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## CoA World Religions Class Visits Local Mosque

Our students enjoyed the recent opportunity to tour the local Athens mosque, Al Huda Islamic Center, as part of our World Religions class. They learned firsthand how Muslims pray and express their faith. Please be praying for our students as they learn more about other belief systems and how to share the love of Christ with those from different religious backgrounds!

## CoA Student Experience Highlight



*CoA undergraduate student Ty Anderson is currently enrolled in the World Religions class.*

"Our visit to the Al Huda Islamic Center taught me plenty more about Islam than I could have learned from a textbook or lectures. Hearing our tour guides' perspectives on Islam and Christianity, experiencing their hospitality, and being able to ask genuine questions without worrying about conflict or offense was quite refreshing. Because of our visit, my opinion of Muslim culture and people has changed for the better and I now have a greater hope for their salvation. I would recommend that any Christian who wants to be better equipped to reach the lost takes our World Religions course and visits another faith's place of worship in a controlled setting like this!"

## CoA Upcoming Opportunities

Make plans now to go deeper in your faith. CoA has many ways to connect you with others who share your passion for life in Christ.



### 2023 National Day of Prayer

Come join the Athens-area community for the 72nd annual National Day of Prayer!

**Register now** to reserve your seat or to sponsor a table!

**Thursday, May 4**

**7:30-8:30 AM**

**The Classic Center of Athens**

### 2023 *Transformed!* Conference



"*Let there be light!*" is the theme of this year's *Transformed!* teaching conference! **Early Bird registration** is open now!

**Saturday, June 10**

**9:00 am-4:00 pm**



### Boston Trip

Please be praying for our upcoming mission trip to Boston! A six-member team of CoA faculty and students will be traveling May 6-13 to partner with a local church plant through evangelism, service projects, prayer walking, and cultural immersion in an unchurched context. Pray for God's provision and blessing and that this trip will be impactful both for the participants and the local communities being served!



### Looking Ahead - Summer @ CoA

What are you doing this summer? Consider attending CoA for a class or two! Applications for summer semester enrollment are now open and are being received through the end of April for classes that start mid-May. **Check out our summer 2023 course schedule!**

### Audit a Class

Enjoy our courses throughout the year without a degree track! CoA courses are available to the public when you enroll as an auditing student! **See what classes are available and register today!**



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## New 8-Week Class Cohorts

CoA is pleased to announce we are now offering upcoming summer and fall cohort classes! Each cohort of 20 students will journey together through our Transformational Leadership or Care & Counseling degree programs. Cohorts will meet year round in 8-week blocks, and will be under the care and guidance of a Cohort Faculty member. Cohort classes will be offered primarily by videoconference with some interactive online courses. Please call 706-254-7604 today to schedule your Admissions Advising Appointment!



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## CoA Partnerships - Service Opportunities

### The Sparrow's Nest

CoA has had a long-standing partnership with the [Sparrow's Nest of Athens](#). The Sparrow's Nest offers many services to the homeless community and those desiring to break the cycle of addiction. Their goal is to restore people back to their God-given purpose and identity in Christ. The Sparrow's Nest believes that Christ is King, and they strive to always keep open arms, live wise, grow well, eat last, and always be fishing. As they follow these core principles, it enables them to minister to those who may have been broken, beaten, abused, and stereotyped by the harshness of the world. One of the ways CoA partners with the Sparrow's Nest is by ministering to the students of their "Breaking the Cycle" class. The mission of this class is to help participants address their thinking, behavior, and/or substance use disorders to break the cycle of generational poverty. For more information, or to volunteer, please contact [dpesaresi@collegeofathens.edu](mailto:dpesaresi@collegeofathens.edu).

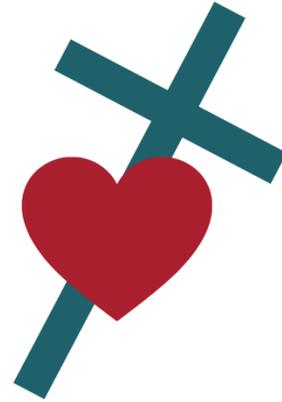


*Once helped, now helping - Terry and Tonya Bennett paying it forward at the Sparrow's Nest!*

## New Heart Thrift Store

Planning on doing some spring cleaning? Looking to refresh your home or closet? Be sure to stop by the [New Heart Thrift Store](#) and stock up for the new season! Located just outside of downtown Watkinsville at 1450 Greensboro Highway, New Heart is open Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00am until 5:00 pm.

Proceeds from purchases and donations will help fund the CoA student scholarship fund while also giving back to other community ministries. Additionally, volunteers are also always needed and appreciated! To volunteer, please call 706-705-1702 or email [info@newheartthriftstore.org](mailto:info@newheartthriftstore.org).



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## Campus Development Update



We are ready to move some dirt on our campus property! Under the direction of Smith Planning Group, the campus infrastructure plans have been finalized for our first major phase of development. The architectural plans for the House of Hope, House of Joy, and Prayer Cabins are complete. As God move the hearts of His saints to provide the funding, progress will commence! [Click here](#) for more details about the CoA building plans. Thank you for your prayers that God will make an incredible place for our students to live and our community to visit!

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## Thank You, CoA Business Sponsors!



## CoA Mission Statement

College of Athens is a biblically-grounded, Holy Spirit-empowered, accredited Christian college that prepares and restores men and women who will teach, reach, lead, and minister to others out of their identity in Christ through relational, hands-on training for life and leadership in the church, in the marketplace, and across the globe.

### Our Contact Information

\*{{Organization Name}}\*  
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\*{{Organization Website}}\*

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