



August 17, 2022  
A Note from April Andrick

Dear Friends,

### Where Y'At?!?!?!?

I am finally starting to feel fully rested from our week of camp at Lakeside Institute a couple of weeks ago.

I do not know the last time anyone else slept in a non-air-conditioned space, on a metal bunk bed with the thinnest mattress ever produced in the history of mattresses, in a large open bunkroom with 50+ of your closest friends and people you have never met before, but I highly recommend it! LOL!



I imagine when most people think of summer camp for teens, they imagine a lot of different scenarios.



Very messy situations. (You wouldn't be wrong.)



Time to grow closer to each other. (Right again.)



Time to worship together. (Oh, the sound of 73 teens worshipping in song together.)



Experiences to draw closer to Jesus.

**“Where y’at?”**

If you are asked that question, what would be your first response?

Mine would be responding with my physical location. “I’m on my way, about 5 min out,” “I’m seated on the patio,” or “I’m in the laundry room.” It’s typically a fairly simple question to answer.

**But what if the question is not about your physical location, but instead about where you are in your spiritual walk / faith journey?** How easy would it be to answer that question then?

How easy is it to answer now, right where you are, in the privacy of your own thoughts reading this letter? **How often do you evaluate where you are on your journey and really check in with yourself?**

**“Where y’at?”**

This is the question that was asked of our campers this year at Lakeside Institute. This was the theme of the week and the underlying message in so many of our activities, in small

group discussions, and in private conversations. This was the individual call to each camper during Communion. “Where y’at?”

Much like the responses I imagine I would receive from those of you reading this letter, the responses and conversations from the youth ran all ends of the spectrum. And each response was met with grace and understanding, because that question, as simple as it may be, is deeply personal and requires significant introspection, and it’s not one we ask of each other, or ourselves, very often.

We spoke with youth who felt as though they once understood and were once firm in their faith, but the pandemic has left them unsure, with so many questions about how & why.

We spoke with youth who were realizing they had stopped taking the actions needed to grow in their faith, but really hadn’t taken the time to think about it until they were faced with this question.

We spoke to youth who were thirsty for more and needed help going deeper in their faith.

Each of these conversations was uniquely precious, allowing space for reflection, contemplation, and decisions.

### **What about for you? “Where y’at?”**

Two of the conversations I enjoyed the most were very similar in theme: “I am waiting for the big feeling/looking for the surreal experience, and I am trying hard to create the situation I need to feel God closer to me.”

We talked at great length about how much we miss when we are looking for specific outcomes. We talked about how faith is formed through those times between the big feelings & experiences and being able to see the beauty and Christ in those moments.

We talked about how if we are always trying to force, create, or choose the moments we feel close to God, then we are missing the beauty of being fully present in each of the moments created specifically for us, where Jesus is already present.

I am so thankful that our church supports, encourages, and sponsors our youth to go to a place every year where these are the types of conversations that are being had, questions that are being asked, and thoughts that are being provoked... where our youth can grow their own faith in ways beyond their everyday surroundings and practices.



I am also very thankful that these are the types of questions and conversations that we have within our own church community... where we ask each other thought provoking and sometimes very hard questions, while walking through the answers together, being supported.

**I want to encourage you to reach out to someone today to ask them “Where y’at?” and share with them your answer as well.**

And if you are not sure of your answer, that’s totally okay! Just starting to think about it is a great first step, and this is just the community to do that in!

If you do not have someone to share that conversation with, I would love to hear from you and share with you!

Shalom,

April A.



April Andrick  
Director of Youth Ministry  
humc\_youth@yahoo.com

 **Hilliard**  
**United Methodist Church**

God Loves You  No Matter What

5445 Scioto Darby Road  
Hilliard, Ohio 43026 | 614.876.2403  
info@hilliardumc.org  
www.hilliardumc.org