

Worship Outreach leads hundreds at national conference

By William Wade & Kylie Stamper
Staff reporters

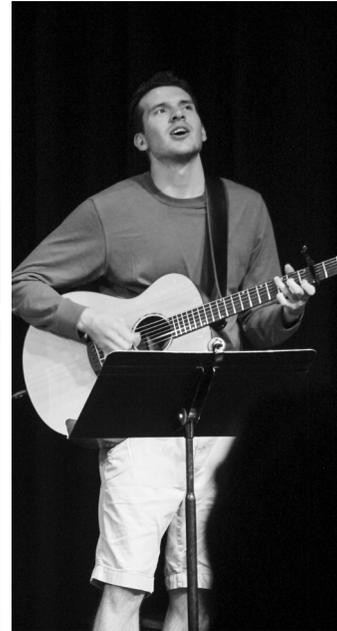
Members of Worship Outreach will be heading to Atlanta, GA, for the Imagine What's NEXT conference on November 4-6 as the house worship band. The group will be leading worship for around 700 college students and campus ministers at three different worship services throughout the weekend.

The biannual conference is for United Methodist college students around the country. While the theme is "Dream. Go. Do," the focus will be on the future of the United Methodist Church and what comes next for students both within the church and out in the world. The NEXT website says that the conference is "a unique space created out of The United Methodist Student Movement. NEXT is about encouraging and supporting those who dream of making a difference in the world right now for Christ. As we grow and connect across the globe, NEXT serves as a pool of partners, perspectives, and resources to help you in your faith and leadership development."

The conference will feature Romal Tune, Shane Claiborne, and Farhana Sultana as headline speakers and the band Stars Go Dim as the guest band. Daniel Reffner, religion & philosophy senior, will also be at the conference as a worship & arts speaker. He will be doing live pottery during a worship set and he will also have the opportunity to lead a roundtable discussion.

Scott Olney, computer science sophomore, said that the opportunity to play at the conference will stick with him for a long time. "It's a huge opportunity," Olney said, "To be able to play for so many people will be huge for us." Olney plays electric guitar and keyboard for the band.

Olney, who said that he purchased a new guitar just for the conference, also spoke about the impact Greg Reffner, religion & philosophy senior, had on the band



Top: Greg Reffner, religion & philosophy senior, Kyndra Fuqua, psychology junior, Mariah Patillo, elementary education junior, Victoria Lybarger, elementary education sophomore, Jaime Davison, religion & philosophy sophomore, Melissa Connell, religion & philosophy junior, and Scott Olney, computer science sophomore, will lead worship at the NEXT conference in Atlanta, GA. (Kylie Stamper/Staff Photographer)

Middle: Victoria Lybarger, elementary education sophomore, sings for the Alumni homecoming dinner. (Kylie Stamper/Staff Photographer)

Right: Greg Reffner, religion & philosophy senior, plays the guitar for the welcome back chapel event at the beginning of the school year. (Kylie Stamper/Staff Photographer)

Bottom Left: Scott Olney, computer science sophomore, plays on his keyboard to welcome students back to school during chapel. (Kylie Stamper/Staff Photographer)

being selected to perform this year. "Greg actually wrote an essay campaigning for us to perform," Olney said, "I honestly don't know if we would've been selected without that."

The band went through an application process over the summer in order to be selected as the house band that included submitting information about the band, video samples of what the band does and what their sound is, and the short essay explaining why Worship Outreach should be chosen and what the band would bring to the conference in terms of leading a congregation of college students from around the country. The band was accepted in late July and they have been in rehearsals preparing for the event since the beginning of the semester.

With 700 students speculated to be in attendance, Melissa Connell, religion & philosophy junior, said that it would be the largest group of people that these musicians have had the opportunity to lead in worship.

Southwestern students performing are Olney, Reffner, Connell, Jaime Davison, religion & philosophy sophomore, Mariah Patillo, elementary education junior, and Victoria Lybarger, elementary education sophomore. Brandi Young, business administration senior, and Kylie Stamper, communication senior, will also be joining the band at the conference as members of the Design Team. Young is assisting with planning the conference and Stamper will be working with social media, photos, and video production during the conference. Faculty attending are Martin Rude, director of Worship Outreach, and campus minister Ben Hanne. Several other Southwestern College students will also be attending the conference as participants.

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