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Having been raised Jewish and somewhat observant of the religion my whole life, Christianity is something that cannot be avoided growing up in America, especially in the South, where I am from. However I never really knew much about the religion other than what I saw from my friends in school. To go to a church, research its history, and learn about their community is something that was completely foreign to me, but a very exciting to experience.

The Church that I attended for this project was Meridian Woods Church of Christ. The vision statement of the church is “We are One People, Following One King, Serving One Purpose.” And their mission statement is “To create an atmosphere where people from all walks of life can serve G-d in genuine unity (**Calling**); to follow wholeheartedly the will of G-d as He transforms us through the Holy Spirit, His Word, and prayer (**Commitment**); to connect people, (**Action**) Each as a means to glorify G-d.” This was clearly evident as I walked into the church for the first time. When I walked in, I was met graciously by every single person there even though they had no idea who I was. I sat down with Campus Minister Adam Farnsworth to gather the history of Meridian Woods

Like all other Churches of Christ, Meridian Woods is autonomous, meaning that they create their own rules and laws to follow. Meridian Woods was established in 1961, and they had a group of eleven elder members of the church propose a set of laws and to this day they still follow them. The church was originally established in 1961 on Call Street so they would be close to campus. Being close to campus allowed Meridian

Woods attract many college students looking for a close community that they can provide. Although Meridian Woods Church of Christ is now located 2870 North Meridian Rd. Tallahassee, Fl, they still attract many college aged students to their Church. The Meridian Woods Church of Christ sets out to be much more of a community feel rather than just a religious institution. The Church strives to embrace diversity in the community and does not discriminate towards anyone.

Meridian Woods was initially founded to be more of a community for college aged students, however the community of the church today welcomes everyone and their congregation reflects it. The Sixties were a turbulent time for college campuses, especially Florida State with all of the protesting going on in Tallahassee; FSU was nicknamed “Berkley of the South.” During this time discrimination, prejudice, and racism were sadly common occurrences, but when the church was originally founded, it stood firm in its mission Statement that all walks of life are welcome. One unique rule of the church that has been institutionalized that exemplifies this is that there is no discrimination during communion.

Another example of Meridian Woods’ values of diversity and acceptance in the community is a story about a member of the church who today has a plaque in his honor. In the early 1970’s before there was a huge HIV/AIDS crisis in the nation, the church accepted a man named James McLeod who was diagnosed with AIDS, despite whatever sentiments or stigmas there may have been about the disease at that time. This probably did not sit well with many of the congregants at that time, but Meridian Woods accepted him with open arms because they were not exclusive and hold their original values very highly. This was before the time of rampant fear of the disease in America, however

McLeod still chose to sit in the same seat in the same pew in the top right corner of the church to be somewhat further away from the rest of the congregation every time as to not make anyone else uncomfortable. Today he is commemorated with a plaque (to the right) on the pew where he sat during services so he will be remembered, also more importantly to emphasize the church's unwavering commitment to their values and mission statement.

After gathering a good background history of the church from the Minister, I asked him a few questions about his thoughts on the church, and the community of the church itself. Minister Adam Farnsworth has been a Minister at Meridian Woods Church of Christ for seven years. In those years he said that the biggest change he has witnessed in the congregation is the growing numbers and diversity the of members. Because the Church of Christ is a denomination of Christianity that leaves autonomy to the individual churches, Meridian Woods has been able to stand by their core beliefs of creating an atmosphere where all walks of life can serve G-d.

Today, Meridian Woods Church of Christ provides meals open to the public every Wednesday, midweek worship services, as well as the normal Sunday worship services and bible class. There are over 43,000 different congregations of the Church of Christ in the USA, and over 2 million members of the church. There are over ten Church of Christ churches in Tallahassee, and Minister Farnsworth claims that it is the "most diverse" in the city. Minister Farnsworth attributes this diversity to their original core values and mission statement, but as well as their community outreach programs that focus on reaching out to college students on campus.