

## Breakthrough in Minnesota

Fresh from four weeks of intensive evangelism and discipleship at North Myrtle Beach Summer Mission, Zach (St. Cloud, '22) is excited to help fellow students come to know Christ — an amazing shift from the Zach of a few months ago: crying himself to sleep at night ... wondering what to do, where to start, and how to fix things. What happened?

A week-end party-er since high school, Zach's drinking had started to become more of a "Monday through Sunday" thing. COVID restrictions hijacked the end of his sophomore year, leaving the same 30 or 40 students showing up at the same bars each night, all flush with stimulus cash.

Segueing into summer 2020, underage Zach ended up in police custody, having blacked out on someone's front lawn. Considering his major in Law Enforcement, the irony of the arrest sent Zach into deep depression. What had happened to that competitive, athletic, "decent grades" guy he used to be? Sobbing in his bed, feeling unfulfilled and without a future, Zach texted Trevor, his older brother, "I'm



### PRAYER REQUESTS

1. Pray for wisdom in our work: discerning what the real needs of new and senior staff are as we seek to help place them.
2. Pray for special times with our young grandson Roman as we provide some care while his mom is in classes.
3. Pray for the Lord's guidance for our children who are looking at other jobs now.
4. Pray for a teacher sponsor for the Cru club at Avalon Middle School.

so sick of this lifestyle." Trevor's reply? "Go to Cru."

Trevor, also in Law Enforcement, had encountered God through Cru a few years earlier. At the time, 16-year old Zach couldn't understand how Trevor had been able to change from the angry brother he'd known his whole life.

"I'm jealous of your breakthrough. I don't think it will work for me ... but I'll try," Zach texted back.

So, on that unseasonably warm Minnesota night, Zach walked into a church where students had gathered to experience Cru's virtual Winter Conference. He felt emotionally drained and doubtful — conspicuous ... until he heard the band playing a song tailored just for him: Breakthrough. Amazed, Zach felt relief, the weight lifting off of him. "Like a toddler in a new world," is how Zach sums up his spring semester experience of salvation, discipleship, Bible study, church ... "ups with a few downs," the downs dwindling when he moved out and away from his party friends mid-May, opting instead for gym workouts and basketball. "You can't have one foot in and the other out."

Early on, Zach committed to the summer mission, where God's loving truth continued to penetrate: "My faults and mistakes no longer define me."

Now back at St. Cloud, Zach met up with some of his old buddies, enduring their taunts of “Preacher Boy,” and agreeing with them, “You’re right. I’m not better than you. We all need help.” Zach’s been asked to leverage some of his newly discovered gifting, helping Cru reach out to other students, initiating Christian community in the dorms, and emceeding Cru’s weekly meeting. “God has given me a big heart for others.”

Pray for Zach to grow steadily from “spiritual toddlerhood” to a leader, firm in his faith.

We are so grateful for your prayers for us and the many gifts that sustain us in the work of sending out new missionaries. Perhaps Zach will be one of them some day!

*With love in Jesus, Steve & Rochelle*