Connecting Through Worship

Colossians 3:16 says “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God”. This scripture completely reflects what the THRIVE worship night was on November 21, 2020. Singles and young marrieds gathered together to praise and worship God through song, prayer, fellowship, and reflective thoughts on this year. We had fire pits, delicious cider and hot cocoa and ultimately a cozy outdoor environment to bask in God’s goodness and love even amidst a challenging space.

RACHEL’s THOUGHTS:

I was filled with joy for every minute of this night for so many reasons. First, it was my first time at the church building since early March. I was brought back to moments of singing and rejoicing, learning and fellowshipping together in the church building and the privilege that was. I then got to see brothers and sisters I haven't seen physically since March and finally met those whom I have only met/interacted with virtually. My heart was so full!! There's a deep fulfilling beauty I find in being able to lift my hands and sing praises to God. Singing songs like “Great are you Lord” and “Good Good Father”, we were reminded of the amazing God we serve and therefore of the many reasons we have to be grateful. Throughout the night, brothers and sisters got up to pray, praying in gratitude to God, praying for unity in Christ’s diverse body and praying for God to continue to lead and guide us as only He can. At the end of the night, we gathered around fire pits and, in small groups, shared our gratitude for 2020 with one another. For me, my gratitude for this year was in the refinement and healing that took place as I was led to stillness in Christ. I was faced with myself like never before. I was able to see my worship to God being in my surrender to His will, His way and ultimately the hope that I have in eternity not in my time on earth. Others reflected on Gods faithfulness to us in always providing us with what we need to fulfill his purpose as well as for family, friends, and technology to remain close and connected even when we are physically apart. As everyone shared, I was further encouraged by God's love for us. Its a privilege to be able to stand, worshipping God for not just what he has done this year but for who He has been to us. With tears in my eyes, I say thank you God. For me 2020 has not been the easiest year with the loss of two family members, a lot of shifts in life, and facing some serious and humbling conviction about various areas for growth and areas where healing was not sought but instead I sought control. However, I have never been alone. This year, I have not only felt closer to brothers and sisters all over but I have felt even closer to God. For that I'm grateful. The storm is passing over. God is in control and its only through his power and his strength that I can even say that genuinely, see clearly, love fully, and walk in true purpose and joy.

KHIRY’s THOUGHTS:

The evening of 11/21/20 was a dream. 2020 has been an incredibly hard year for everyone. The pandemic has physically distanced the community of believers and has changed what physical worship looks like since March. I recently moved down to ATL and was having a hard time adapting, connecting and building relationships. Planning

the worship night started with an inspiration from the Spirit and ended up being a huge encouragement to so many people. It wasn't just me having a hard time, we all were. If i am honest, I had been missing corporate acoustic worship and knew that I couldn't be the only person who had felt the same way. I believe God wanted this night to happen because everything fell into place perfectly, even down to the weather, everything was Incredible. The theme for the night was “Thankfulness” Centered around Colossians 3:16. On the surface, thankfulness seems out of place in regards to a year like 2020. But the truth is we all have so much to be thankful for. In the ugliness and confusion of a hard year, God showed us how to be faithful together, how to endure a pandemic by abiding in him, and staying connected through daily encouragement. The Thrive worship night was an overflow from a place of faith, A declaration that said: “We may be bruised but we are not done fighting.” I loved looking out and seeing my brothers and sisters with their hands raised and heads lifted high singing to Jesus! I was deeply moved by the bold vulnerable prayers, inspired by the poetry that was shared and Encouraged by vulnerable sharing that we had around the bonfires to close the evening. The Holy Spirit was clearly moving in the midst of God’s people, even after the worship night finished; the fellowship went on for an hour. Moving to a new State during a pandemic is not easy, it is very hard and I would not recommend it! But I am thankful God led me here and that he has been leading my heart in this time and giving me opportunities to grow deeper roots. I can't fully express in words how much this night meant to me, but what I witnessed was God's people marrying theology with reality. What I mean by that is, we had taken the theology of omnipresence and brought it into the reality of our lives that night; God was with us! He was among us and we believe we honored him without our sweet aroma of worship and praise. I am looking forward to more nights like this with the family of believers worshipping unhinged, passionately and intentionally to our God who continually brings us through the toughest of storms faithfully together.