

SIMPLE, Yet So Powerful

*God is on the move
at Ferrum College.*



Layla* lingered after the chapel service, full of questions. Taylor Richardson, next generation pastor at **Franklin Heights Church** in Rocky Mount, leads these gatherings, known as The Heights, with an emphasis on expository Bible teaching and worship. As Richardson addressed Layla's questions, he shared John 3:16.

"It's so simple, yet so powerful," replied Layla. Coming from a non-Christian family and a different culture, she had never heard the verse before. After several weeks of attending the chapel service, she placed her faith in Christ. Though she now faces challenges from her family because of her conversion, she remains resolute: "I'm not turning back."

Layla's story is one of many reflecting God's work on the campus of Ferrum College.

This small, private liberal arts school, nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains about 45 minutes south of Roanoke, is seeing students gather voluntarily for Bible study, grow in their faith, and witness others begin to follow Christ.

Among the college's roughly 900 students, new opportunities are emerging to equip them for Gospel ministry. In addition to chapel services, a new initiative trains students in practical "tent-making" skills and prepares them to share their faith, whether in the United States or in their home countries. Caleb Walker, missions pastor at Franklin Heights Church, serves as an adjunct instructor in the program.

The Christian Ministries Certificate offers a flexible pathway that can be integrated into a variety of majors. Students studying fields such as education, nursing, counseling, or social work can combine academic coursework with spiritual formation and hands-on ministry experience. The program marks the renewal of a long-dormant religious studies program at the private college, which has historic ties to the United Methodist tradition.

At the heart of this effort is Professor Jason Powell, who has served at Ferrum for 25 years while also serving as a deacon at Franklin Heights Church. What began as a calling placed on his heart years ago has taken shape

through careful curriculum design and clear evidence of God's providence. The program has received full support from Eric Vanden Eykel, dean of faculty, and Mirta M. Martin, president of the college.

Stan Parris, senior pastor of Franklin Heights Church, sees this work as part of a larger vision. "This reflects God's call for the church to fulfill the Great Commission by serving others and fostering spiritual growth in Christ."

Powell offers broad encouragement: "Local campuses are filled with students far from home, often with practical needs and open hearts to the Gospel."

Founded in 1913 as a mission school for rural Appalachian students who lacked access to education, Ferrum College has evolved from a training school to a junior college and, eventually, to a four-year institution. Its enduring motto, "Not Self, but Others," continues to shape the college's mission.

Today, there is renewed reason to celebrate—God is at work on the Ferrum College campus. ●

**name changed for privacy.*