



Westminster  
Presbyterian Church

## **Meisel Reflection 2020: Anna Northenscold**

*What links, if any, are you making between your summer and fall internships, your college classroom, and other extracurricular learning experiences?*

The importance of community and compassion. The year 2020 has come with all sorts of setbacks and road bumps. This has been true for internships, college, and other personal life events. Like many people, I've been shaken by how much I miss being in-person with others each day and the thrill of working on a team both in the classroom as well as a professional setting. My time working at Westminster and with Parenteau Graves this past year has constantly renewed my passion for working in a collaborative role to help with communications. Every person I worked with shared a common goal of working together as a team to complete daily tasks and projects. However, the big picture that I've come to understand is the importance of communication as a tool for creating and maintaining community- especially in this new time of COVID-19. My internship has shown me that people from all walks of life share a common bond which is to feel a sense of belonging. This is something that I think we each struggle with throughout our lives as we evolve as people. Our identity and who we call family helps shape who we are. Having the opportunity to partner with Westminster to help in sharing the message of inclusion and tender love is something that I will take with me both into the classroom and other professional settings.

*How did this experience help you define the meaning of community and your place/ role within it?*

My internship has shaped my understanding of how connected we are to one another and the role we each play in shaping one another. Westminster

has been one of the most impactful communities throughout my life as I've grown and evolved as a person. The messages and mission of this church and the people are what makes this place so special to me. My role as a communications intern gave me a deeper appreciation for the technicalities and thoughtfulness of language and engagement specifically. The ways in which we all choose to interact with one another, whether it's in-person, socially distanced, or online, has a direct impact on others. How we choose to use the tools which are available to us to shape the messages that go out into the world is entirely up to us. After having the opportunity to work alongside two incredible organizations, I hope to continue pushing both myself and others to think critically and compassionately about the ways in which we are all helping to shape ourselves, others, and the world around us to create a more compassionate and empowering society.

*In what ways did this experience help illuminate for you what it means to be a person of faith?*

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 has been my favorite Bible passage has been the same since I was young. The scripture states, *"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."* These are things which I am always needing to remember at times in my life when I am anxious, feeling emotional, or experiencing burn-out. With the recent past events surrounding the murder of George Floyd and the ripple effect it had in our local community as well as the nation brought me back to this scripture reading. I felt like I needed to remember the part of faith which resonates with me the most. Love to me is what binds us all together. It's something we choose to give to others and is unconditional in nature. This message is something that's at the heart of Westminster and its mission statement to share "God's peace, love, and justice" in addition to being a "telling presence in the city." As I move forward with my education and continue onto the professional world, I hope to maintain a strong sense of my vocational calling to be a

messenger as a person of faith.

*How did you find yourself integrating your Meisel internship into your continued learning on campus?*

Since returning back to campus, I've noticed that I have been much more aware of engagement as well as the rhetorical strategies students, professors, and great thinkers of the past have used to shape others and the world. One of my English courses I took this Fall Semester focused in on the disparities of authorship in the high school classroom and how it shapes students. Does it set them up to understand the world through a biased lens or is it truly allowing individuals to think critically about the status quo? This was one of the moments where I was brought back to my Meisel internship and the importance of intention behind content creation. This is applicable to any medium whether it be written, verbal, or digital. How we communicate with one another influences our understanding of self and the world. In an age where technology is informing the news and everything is being recorded via social media and camera phones we are having to think critically about how engage with others. There is a new sense of ownership and accountability which modern society is being held to with this new era of social media. Who we are may be different than who we want to be but we have an opportunity to change the norms of what is viewed as acceptable. The past should not define us but inform our present selves to allow us to launch into a future that we can all be proud of.

*In what ways did COVID shape your Meisel experience?*

COVID-19 has pushed me to think creatively and become more adaptable. This year has presented many challenges, however, working with the Westminster team and Parenteau Graves has allowed me to reinvent how I define community. There has been a large shift in our dependency on technology as being an integral way to maintain a sense of togetherness. For Coming Together Sunday the church had to reimagine how we could hold fast to our beloved traditions of being *together* while also maintaining

proper COVID-19 protocol. Working alongside various members on the Westminster staff on this project reminded me how strongly individuals felt towards this event. Amidst all of the COVID-19 setbacks, people were pushing to maintain a sense of normalcy as a way to remind everyone that although we are physically apart, we remain one body of people through a set of shared beliefs. This pandemic has brought to light many things for me but the biggest take away is that people all over in various circumstances are united by a common thread of community which transcends physical space. This is what has energized me throughout my time as a Meisel scholar, knowing that I'm helping to make an impact on people and remind others that they're still a part of something. Westminster is still here for them.

*What next steps do you plan to take toward discerning, refining, or implementing a vocational direction?*

I am currently looking into pursuing a career in communications and marketing. My hope is to look for another internship this summer to build on all of the wonderful skills that I've gained from my time as a Meisel scholar with both Parenteau Graves and Westminster. I plan to graduate next year from Luther College with a BA in French and English. This upcoming Fall Semester I will be studying abroad in France and am working with my advisor to find a communications internship abroad. I'd like to have another opportunity to engage and be shaped by others to become a better global citizen as well as help make an impact in the world. I'd like to take a moment to thank Brigitte Parenteau from Parenteau Graves for working with me this past summer. Her guidance and leadership as a communications head has given me a fuller understanding of all the ways communications shapes us and an organization. I would like to thank Westminster as well for its continual support and love that it has given me over the years. I've grown up in this congregation and always find myself coming back. Having this opportunity to learn alongside such inspiring people has been incredibly impactful and I am so grateful. A special thanks to Suzanne McInroy, Sarah Brouwer, and

Meghan Gage-Finn who all have been alongside me throughout this process and journey. These women have been so helpful as advisors and colleagues over the past few months. I can't thank them enough for all they have shown me.