



PARKSIDE'S PASTORAL RESIDENTS CLASS OF 2025

(From Left: AJ, Matt, and Zhida)

Parkside's pastoral residency program is a greenhouse where experienced pastors disciple men exploring God's call on their lives. Many who have gone through the program have continued to pastor at Parkside, and others have gone on to pastor other churches. Each year, we are delighted to welcome a new class of pastoral residents and to watch as the Lord equips them and matures them for ministry. This year, we welcome three young residents: Matt Bandy, AJ Coy, and Zhida Zhu.

MATT BANDY

Matt Bandy comes to us from Cedarville University. He heard of the residency program through a career fair on campus and through his connection with previous pastoral resident Isaac Shaw. Prior to joining us at Parkside, Matt completed two pastoral internships, one of which was with a middle school ministry of a church in Cedarville this past year. "It's a lot of fun," he said. "I really got to know a lot of students and their families." Matt has also participated in short-term mission trips to

Malawi, Africa, and South Asia. He hopes to broaden his experience by serving in a variety of ministries and teaching at different age levels.

AJ COY

AJ considers it a blessing that he grew up going to Parkside Church. He especially appreciates having parents who prioritized church life and who modeled serving in various ministries. AJ first felt called to pastoral ministry himself when he served on a middle school youth group worship team.

AJ has completed a worship residency at another church, during which he taught youth group and men's Bible studies. His experience there and the encouragement of others led him to explore what full-time ministry might look like by entering the residency program at Parkside. This year, AJ wants to dig deeper into his study of Scripture, and he wants to grow his teaching ability.

ZHIDA ZHU

Zhida grew up in Houston, Texas, and attended Dallas Theological Seminary, where he met his wife, Ngun, whom he married in June. It was Ngun who found the pastoral residency program at Parkside. On faith, they made the move to Cleveland, "believing it would be a good opportunity to get mentored and learn ministry from experienced pastors."

Zhida has experience interning at his home church in Dallas. There, he worked with the young adult group

and preached in the service once a month. Coming from a mechanical engineering background, Zhida feels that pastoral ministry is teaching him to have greater empathy. “Pastoral ministry and the internship enabled me to understand people better and feel a stronger burden to care for them on a more personal level,” he said. He hopes to continue to learn patience, humility, and wisdom through his time here at Parkside.

A MUSICAL GROUP

Did you know that all our residents have some musical or lyrical talent? Zhida used to rap and do slam poetry at open mics, Matt played the trumpet in marching band in high school, and AJ plays acoustic guitar and is learning bass guitar.

IF YOU COULD HAVE LUNCH WITH ANYONE WHO EVER LIVED, WHO WOULD YOU PICK?

- Matt picked the apostle Peter, stating that it would be interesting to hear how he grew through his mistakes.
- AJ would like to have lunch with his great-grandfather Francis. He is interested in the traits he sees in his father and grandfather and how Francis must have passed them down to him.
- Zhida picked Tim Keller. “I think he had a very prophetic vision of what future ministry would look like. . . . I feel like there would be a lot of wisdom and insights to gain from him.”

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR RESIDENTS

You can pray for our pastoral residents in the following ways:

- Matt asks for prayer as he gets connected to people in the church and gets to know the area. He also asks for prayer for wisdom and discernment as he determines his steps for next year and beyond.
- AJ would like you to pray for understanding of the Lord's will for him as he seeks the best use of his life for God's kingdom.
- Zhida asks for prayer that he and Ngun would grow in understanding of each other as they begin their marriage. They are rejoicing in the news of Ngun's pregnancy, and they ask for prayer that it will go smoothly.