

Ecclesia Clear Lake Elder Profile

Name: ___Kris Armstrong_____

1. How long have you been a part of the Ecclesia Clear Lake church family? What initially drew you to the community?

I began attending a church called “At the Water’s Edge” back in 2006 (I believe) which then joined up with another church to become Ecclesia. So I have been a part of Ecclesia since the very beginning. I was initially drawn to the community because it was an incredibly authentic and vulnerable space which really welcomed everyone. The heartbeat of the church was service and focusing our time, energy and money outside of the walls instead of within the walls of the church. This was a new and fresh structure to me and seemed to align well with Jesus’ teachings.

2. In what ways do you currently serve in the church and in the community?

If I am being honest when it comes to serving the church I have not stepped above and beyond in the past few years. I have been steeped deeply in the season of raising small humans with a partner who often travels more than 50% of the time for work. But the humans are becoming more self-sufficient (insert smiling mom face here) and I am ready to step into more of a leadership role. There have been seasons that I have been involved in art ministry and speaking during church (ie providing a benediction or prayer). I also helped start a produce drive in Bacliff with the purpose of providing healthy food to a community that does not readily have access to affordable food. Ecclesia supported this ministry for many years. I helped lead worship for Church Under the Bridge when Ecclesia used to participate in this ministry for people in Houston who are unhoused. I have been dreaming of jumpstarting more art ministry and would love to help spearhead that. I love finding creative ways to worship, connect and learn about God.

When it comes to serving in my community there are several places that I am plugged in. By nature, my job as a Speech Pathologist working in the medical field is an area of service. I find the work that I do is really sacred (as is every job if we choose to see it that way). I often pray for my patients (I’m not sure why but

it is usually in my car), I try to take the time to connect with each person and provide the kindness that I would long for if I was in their position. I also have a family member who lives in a nursing home whom I am legal guardian for. I have spent thousands of hours in the nursing home over the last 15 years and one thing is very apparent there. Loneliness and a longing to be loved is palpable. This has probably been one of the greatest areas of service in my life. There have been seasons that when I have picked up my loved one I also picked up one or two other people and we enjoyed meals or outings together. I never cease to be amazed at how when I walk into a situation attempting to be the person “serving” others, it actually ends up going the other way and someone “serves” me. Each time this happens I am so humbled and my life is enriched.

3. Share an overview of your faith story.

I grew up in the Methodist church in a family that valued attending church, connecting with God and allowing each of us daughters to forge our own path in our faith. I experienced a great loss in my early twenties that shook me to my core and made me question almost every truth I knew in this life. I never questioned God’s existence but I went to the mat questioning his sovereignty. In the midst of numbing grief I wondered how God could be good. Since then he has revealed his goodness to me time and time again until even this rebellious spirit could see his sovereignty and goodness. I quite literally went from drowning in my own grief to drowning in his grace. God also showed me that grief and joy could coexist and that just as we are complex, he also is a God of complexities beyond my understanding.

4. At ECL we long to have deep roots in the historic Trinitarian Christian faith of the global church. Reflect on your understanding of the Trinity.

Why do I feel like I need to write a dissertation (for which I am sorely not qualified to do)?! I guess because the concept of the Trinity is so simple and yet so incredibly complex. I read recently that we as humans are 1 person, and God is 3. That simple. The concept that God is more complex than us is a much needed reminder that he knows and sees things we simply can’t and therefore that is where our faith and trust in him comes in to play. Each personhood of the trinity has a different part to play in our relationship with God and yet they are all God. Lets have a cup of coffee together to unpack this one 😊

5. At ECL we long for deep bonds of connection in human relationships within our church and in our community. What is the role of authentic and healthy community in church and in faith formation?

How can we grow as humans, as Christians, as members of our small church without being authentic? In my own life I have seen the most growth in my life when I am walking with other Jesus lovers and allowing them to see all sides of me (the ones I am proud of and the ones that need a lot of work). Honestly I think I have learned the most from others who share the parts of themselves that are not neatly kept and tidy, rather vulnerable and honest. If we want to make a space for vulnerability and authenticity we have to make the space big (meaning its big enough for everyone, not just people who look or speak like us or have similar backgrounds or culture).

6. At ECL we long to be actively engaged in matters of compassion and justice in our community and world. Why is this an important longing? What does a healthy posture of pursuing this longing look like in our context?

I love that this is a staple of who we are as Ecclesians. As someone who is very much a dreamer and an ideas person I think for me this means that I actually act on my dreams. I think this longing is so important since if we don't engage in matters of compassion and justice we are just building a castle around our own life. I believe this is why we live and worship in community, so we can lovingly hold each other accountable. I think a healthy posture of pursuing this longing starts with creating a space to talk about what we are passionate about or what breaks our heart. Typically I have seen this happen in small groups, where you can not just dream together but also create a tangible plan. When I originally had the idea for the produce drive I got so excited. I shared my idea with my small group and then in my 23 naivety I waited for someone to pick up my idea and make it a reality. My small group lovingly told me that if I wanted that to happen then I would need to take the steps. They would support me but if I had a dream I needed to have action to back it up. At first I felt silly and even frustrated but after I was provided with a much needed push I took the steps and it became a meaningful way to serve our local community. It also forever changed my mindset when I have dreamt of a way to serve the community and I am grateful for that.