

I grew up in the arms of the church. My father is a Presbyterian minister and my mother is the church secretary. Our life as a family seemed to ebb and flow in accordance with the church's. Weddings, funerals, baptisms, and holidays all to some extent dictated my family's schedule. It is all I have ever known. And in some ways, I hope that is all I will ever know.

I have always loved the church, both the body and the building – the people and the practices. My roots are tightly interwoven with the roots of the church -- my life's key moments marked alongside the formative events in the life of the body of Christ. The faith I hold today has been formed not only by my father and mother, but by the members of the churches I have been a part of. I count that one of my richest blessings. From the felt storyboards to the Bible school songs and hand motions to the Christmas pageants and countless Sunday school classes, my childhood was marked by my time in and with the church.

As I began to mature and forge my own faith journey, I found deeper convictions and a faint whisper of direction. I discovered that my passions and gifts lie in my interactions with people. I love sharing with others, be it my time, my words, a prayer, or a listening ear. As I examined these affinities, I realized my call was to some form of ministry. I had the privilege of exploring this call as I was earning my bachelor's degree at a small Christian liberal arts school both through my formal training as a Bible and Religion major, and also as I was educated informally through conversations in the halls of my dorm and on the couches at local coffee shops.

In addition to the opportunity I had to sharpen my skills and develop a more foundational understanding of theology and Biblical interpretation at Princeton Theological Seminary, I was also able to discern a more specific call to ministry in the parish setting. I served as an intern at Thompson Memorial Presbyterian Church in New Hope, PA and got a unique perspective on pastoral ministry in the congregational setting. While my time serving as a chaplain and completing CPE was also very formative, it was an experience that affirmed my desire to invest in the people I serve long-term and make the journey of faith together. In the hospital setting I

was unable to follow up with patients or establish long-term relationships because of the nature of the work. And so I sense my call to a church where I can really invest in the lives of those I serve was strengthened by that experience.

My first call out of seminary was to Sewickley Presbyterian Church outside of Pittsburgh. This church has been a perfect fit for me in the first few years of ministry. I have had the opportunity to serve in a number of different roles – from teaching preschoolers and leading youth mission trips, to visiting the sick and shut-in, coming alongside grieving families in time of loss, managing adult education courses, and celebrating communion week in and week out, the rhythm of serving this church has been an often chaotic, usually unpredictable, but always rewarding gift.

As I look towards serving in a more specialized associate pastor role, I am eager and open to the ways God will continue to use me and shape me in the building of His Kingdom. Trusting His sovereignty and love is what sustains me in this strange and wonderful call to ministry.