

Drew Marshall
Faith Journey & Sense of Call
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I was blessed to be baptized as an infant and nurtured in Presbyterian churches that took their corporate baptismal vows seriously. I grew up knowing of God's love for me and my inclusion in the covenant community. My parents served as great role models for myself and my four sisters, taking leadership roles in both church and the community, never being content just to belong to anything. My earliest memory of church is my father playing the role of King Herod in a Christmas production; my earliest memory of vacation Bible school is going with my mother to planning sessions at her friend's house. When I was ordained a Presbyterian Elder at the age of 21, both my father and grandfather were among those who laid hands upon me. That has always symbolized the core of my family heritage to me.

After the example of my grandparents and parents, I have always felt compelled to share the leadership skills that God blessed me with. In high school, I was the president of our youth group and led the elementary children in Sunday school and other activities. During college, I was involved in most areas of our church, even helping with the women's group from time to time.

It was during those years that I first felt God's call to devote my life to leadership in the church. I have volunteered in countless capacities with my congregations and presbyteries all of my life. For 25 years, I sought to discern God's will for me beyond volunteering. Full-time ministry as a pastor had always been considered as a possibility for my life, and I prayed that God would let me know if I was missing his call to that role. Through the years I'd had many reassurances from God about my callings, but none to full time ministry.

At the age of 44, frustrated that I did not have enough time as a volunteer to do all of the things that I felt compelled to do, I prayed to God to help me find a way to have more time to devote to the church. God's voice quietly said, "If you were the minister, you *would* have the time."

I was blown away. I felt somewhat like Saul when Ananias helped him to see again. It was crystal clear that it was now time to seek to become a minister of Word and Sacrament and I did not hesitate to accept God's call. I told him I would go and I could only do so with his grace. I prayed hard that God would begin providing me with the rest of the gifts I would need to become a pastor worthy of his calling. I was reassured, and I have been reassured almost daily since then and I have not once had any second thoughts or doubts about my call to ministry in this new capacity.

After 3 years at Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta, I was amazed at the growth that was possible for me and my family. I was honored to be in the company of so many amazing students, faculty, and staff. I studied with great enthusiasm and enjoyed every moment. My wife Suzi has also embraced our calling and served as president of the campus Spouses of Seminarians group and office administrator at Columbia Presbyterian Church while we were at seminary, and since then as an active pastor's wife and my greatest support. My ministry experiences since seminary have reassured us even more that we are following God's path for us in full-time ministry.

We eagerly look forward to the rest of our faith journey and calling to serve God through the PCUSA.