

WOMAN SEMINARIAN FEELS AFFIRMED IN HER CALLING

For soon-to-be graduated M.Div. student Dawn Sherwood, seminary was not her first career. She first worked in the mortgage industry for many years. When that no longer seemed to be the path for her, she went back to school to become a music teacher. Dawn worked as a substitute teacher for six years and a music sub for three years. Throughout her tenure in music education she absolutely loved it and received many affirmations that this was what she was supposed to be doing. However, she was not able to secure a full-time teaching position.

Then a few years ago the idea of attending seminary came to her attention—though it wasn't the first time it had.

"In junior high school, I remember asking my parents if a woman could be a pastor and I was told by both of them 'No.'"

God started working to change Dawn's mind when the pastor of her church retired, and they hired a woman interim and then a woman pastor. Witnessing the acceptance of women in the pulpit showed Dawn that her gender had become less of a factor.

So she began at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary the fall of 2012, and has received confirmation after confirmation that she is exactly where God wants her to be. To her, everything has fallen into place and she feels ready to accept the call to be a pastor.

"One of the main reasons I thought I was not pastor material was because when I get up to speak in front of people, I stammer. But in my Field Education position when I got up to preach my first sermon, the stammering went away. I felt embraced by the Holy Spirit."

So Dawn is waiting for the next chapter to begin, hoping to work as an ordained minister in the PC(USA) in a small to mid-size church close to the North Huntingdon area while her daughter finishes high school. Dawn waits willingly, trusting in God's timing.



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