

MEET PTS



# MDIV STUDENT GUY BROWN MOVES OUTSIDE HIS COMFORT ZONE—FROM BAPTIST TO EPISCOPALIAN

“No one volunteers for this,” says Guy Brown. He’s talking about the call to ministry. And Guy should know about volunteering—commissioned to the U.S. Army, he served as a paratrooper and Army Reservist for 15 years. “But I didn’t find my profession, my vocation, till I answered God’s call,” he notes.

Guy is a relative newcomer to Pittsburgh. Born and raised in Philadelphia and college-educated in Texas at the University of Houston, Guy didn’t move here until 2014. “I’ve learned about myself through different jobs,” he explains, “including hotel management (my undergraduate major) and sales. I’ve discovered my giftedness in sales—but it’s not my passion!”

At the initiative of his father, Guy was baptized in the Episcopal Church as an infant. His mother, however, was Baptist, and though Guy didn’t grow up in a church, she taught Guy about God and the importance of faith. At age 17, not having an immediate awareness of his baptism as an infant, Guy took the step of being baptized in the Baptist church.

As life went on, “God was always trying to get my attention!” Guy says. One day, sitting in church in Maryland, God “kept tapping me on the shoulder. I knew he wanted me to be a minister,” Guy recalls. (Think Jesus’ words to the fishermen Simon and Andrew, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men/people.”) “But I also knew my call was to a role supported by substance—education and training for ministry, in other words. God was calling me to become not only a minister but actually a pastor, a reverend.” That meant seminary—not a requirement for ministerial leadership in the Baptist tradition.

When Guy and his wife and family moved to Pittsburgh, they joined a Baptist church. Their arrival here was a move home for Guy’s wife, who grew up as a member of Holy Cross Episcopal Church in Homewood. “She became a Baptist for me!” says Guy, who soon enrolled as a part-time evening student at PTS in pursuit of his call. Now a full-time middler student in the M.Div. program (and continuing to work full time in sales!), last fall he began his field education.

“Field ed at PTS encourages you to expand your experience in the wider church,” Guy notes, “so, although I felt some internal resistance because of my Southern Baptist upbringing, I decided to explore my wife’s Episcopal tradition and took an assignment at her home church, Holy Cross. I soon fell in love with the Episcopal way of worship—its reverence, attention to detail, and corporate liturgy. Its engaging of mind and body. Its weekly celebration of communion. This slow, methodical, contemplative way of worship captures my complete attention.” And so, Guy has returned to the baptismal roots of his infancy—he’s become Episcopalian.

“One thing I’ve greatly appreciated about PTS is that it pushes you out of your comfort zone, so when you look at who you were when you started your program versus who you are today, you can see how you’ve grown,” says Guy. “The professors here are a diverse group who welcome conversations with students outside class, and my conversations with them have been vitally important for my intellectual and spiritual growth.”

“Leadership in ministry is a serious call,” Guy observes, “and I’ve been able to prepare myself well for it at PTS through rigorous courses not only in New Testament but also in the too-often bypassed Old Testament, which helps us understand the demands of the Christian life alongside the grace that God makes possible through Christ in the New Testament. And I’ve loved learning Greek and Hebrew, which have greatly deepened my understanding of Scripture.” And for all these gifts, together we say, “Thanks be to God!”

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