

Daniel F. Lewis
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A Brief Biographical Statement

I grew up in a loving and nurturing household that did not belong to any particular church for any considerable length of time. I came to faith during my teenage years through my involvement with a number of high school youth groups. These were evangelical groups, and so my newfound faith took on that particular kind of Christian expression and practice. Halfway through college I began to feel very uneasy about the rather narrow-minded way I had been taught to look at the world. Those simple answers were no longer acceptable and I wandered away from my evangelical faith. The chaplain of my college (a Presbyterian minister) helped me through these times by speaking with me at length about everything from Christian vocation to relationships and politics. He served as a model for me of a person of deep and sincere faith who was not a rigid fundamentalist. I left college with a renewed sense of Christian faith, changed as it was by the complexities of life. During the year following graduation, as I worked in a volunteer program in an urban area, I pondered the great desire I had to learn about theology, the Bible, and history, as well as my great desire to serve the world and seek to sow justice and peace in it. I decided to enroll at the seminary because I wanted to see how a deep love for learning the complexities of the Christian faith can co-exist and complement a life of simple service and ministry. I didn't know what form this ministry might take, but I felt certain that God would lead me in the right direction regardless of my ability to see the path.

As I made my way through those years at the seminary, God did indeed open a path for me – though not in the way I might have expected. If pressed, before seminary, to guess at what form my life and ministry might take, I would likely have guessed academia or perhaps the non-profit sector. As it turned out, it was the life of the congregation, in all its beauty and challenge, that finally captured my imagination and grew in me a sense of call. I suppose it was through my field placement in a local church that I began to see how the critical intersection of theology, worship, and life together formed people of faith and changed communities in powerful ways. Whereas before seminary I was almost sure that being a “reverend” was not for me, I emerged from those three years convinced that this was exactly what God had most suited me for: to proclaim the Word of grace in a regular, ordinary way to regular, ordinary people, and to lead these people as we all seek to witness to God's love and grace in our lives and communities.

A strong sense of call to parish ministry was not the only thing I gained from these years. I also emerged with a call to the most important relationship of my life! My wife Susan (also a seminary graduate and ordained minister) and I were married just before our last year at the seminary, and so we've had the privilege of being together in life and ministry for well over a decade now. Over the years we've welcomed first Elizabeth (8 years old) and then Jeffrey (3 years old) into our family, as we have continued to serve and seek God's will for us together. Having served two very different communities of faith – the second of which, the First Presbyterian Church of Statesboro, Georgia, will always hold a particularly special place in our hearts – Susan and I are ready to take on new challenges and see what God has in store for us in Wilmington.

