

Rev. Amy Lawrence – Faith Journey

Countless prayers escorted me into this world and helped me get through the first critical minutes, hours, and days of my life. Due to complications I was forced into this world earlier than expected. Not frequently, but enough times to make an imprint, my family would refer to me as a “miracle baby.” Hearing myself referred to in this way instilled in me the belief that my life is a gift and I have a responsibility to use my life in a way that honors God and all the people who helped me into this world.

I cannot talk about my faith journey without sharing how my family has influenced and continues to influence my walk with God. I am a proud cradle Presbyterian. My great-grandmother was the presenting Elder at my baptism. In my lifetime, I saw and witnessed my great-grandparents and grandparents live their faith with steadfast hope, service to the church and trust in our Lord and Savior. Witnessing different generations and different family members follow Christ and discern their calling through the many seasons of life has been an invaluable gift.

My relationship with God became personal the summer between 3rd and 4th grade. I spent a week at church camp and during that experience I realized God was not just for old people and adults. God wanted a relationship with me, not matter how “young” I was. That was the first time I felt the joy and energy of the Holy Spirit upon me. My relationship with God has seen me through the angst of my teenage years, being a foreign exchange student my junior year of high school, the illness and death of my grandparents, leaving home for college, spending 6 weeks in Turkey engaged in friendship evangelism, following God’s call to seminary and now through the joys and heartaches of ministry.

When I am honest with myself, I felt God calling me to be a minister back in high school. But like most self-respecting followers of Christ, I denied what I felt out of fear and tried to negation a different, less scary, call. It took the death of my beloved grandmother, when I was in college, to stop me from running and to consider seminary. I love learning so the idea of more schooling didn’t intimidate me, but the idea of being a minister filled me with terror. Fortunately, I had the privilege to be a student intern at John Knox Presbyterian Church for two years while at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Under the mentorship of the Rev. Janice Carton and through the grace filled support of the members of John Knox, I was able to acknowledge and embrace my call to be a minister. My first call was to the First Presbyterian Church of Portland, TX. As a newly ordained pastor, I couldn’t have asked for a more loving, forgiving and supportive congregation. It was during this call that I discerned and tried being a bi-vocational minister for a few years. One of the reasons I took a new call in Sussex, NJ was to go back to full-time ministry and to be closer to my family who mostly live in Delaware and Pennsylvania.

As my faith journey unfolds, I am excited about the opportunities, challenges and people that await me. Whatever the future brings I know two things. 1) God will never leave me or abandon me. Even when God is silent, I know God is there. 2) God will send fellow sojourners to walk with me. Together and in community we will serve God’s people and God’s world with love, respect and hope.