

NATALIE RAYGOR

A MESSAGE FROM NATALIE



I was born and raised into The Presbyterian Church (USA). It is where I was baptized, went to Vacation Bible School, was confirmed and became an active member in the youth group. I have had wonderful opportunities to learn and grow from many pastors and youth directors during my adolescent and young adult years. It was through the people of First Presbyterian Church in Dalton, GA that I came to know God's love and to be shaped by the teachings of Jesus Christ. It happened slowly, over time, in structured environments of Sunday School, and in casual moments of fellowship on youth retreats and conferences. This faith community taught me what it meant to belong. They showed me that no matter how far I may stray from God or how stretched my faith might be I will always belong to God and a church family. They taught me that nothing can separate me from the love of Christ Jesus and that in life and death we will always belong to God. These experiences have certainly shaped me as a person and my faith.

I can't name a particular moment when I knew that I was called to ministry. Instead, it's been the gentle leading of the Spirit that has brought me to people and places where God has affirmed over and over again that I am called to congregational ministry. This Spirit led me to attending Presbyterian College for undergrad where I received my Bachelor of Arts degree in Religion and Christian Education. It then led me to my first call to serve as Director of Youth Ministry at White Memorial Presbyterian Church in Raleigh, NC. During my 10 years in Raleigh, I met and married my husband, Kyle. God then called us to Charlotte, NC where I continued my call serving in Youth Ministry at First Presbyterian Church. For the last 19 years, I've had the joy of watching hundreds of youth and children grow in their faith over the years. While working at FPC Charlotte, I began taking courses at Union Presbyterian Seminary and graduated with my Masters of Divinity in 2020. It was also during my time in Charlotte that my husband and I had the joy of expanding our family to three children; Landon (5), Blakely (2), and Luke (6 months).

Through all of these experiences, God has deepened my love for learning and teaching and has shown me the importance of Christian Formation for the church today and the church's future. It is my belief that everything we do as a community of faith – worshiping, serving, praying, learning, fellowshiping – shapes us in becoming more of the people whom God has created us to be.

Words alone cannot express how excited my family and I are to join you in ministry at First Presbyterian, and I'm grateful that God has made the way clear for us to learn and serve together as we grow in faith as Christ's disciples in the world.
