

Sarah Are

Faith Journey: Home

We called the church the “church house.” Mom would urge and plod my brother and I to scramble in our car seats and put our shoes on with cries of “We’re going home, come on!” That might be my earliest memory of church. My parents called church the ‘church house’ as a joke- probably because we, the preacher’s family, were there so often. However, there was an honest dose of truth in those words. The church was our house. It was home. It always has been.

Church was where I took piano lessons- sitting on a phone book in order to reach the keys. The church was where I learned what forgiveness meant, with my 3rd grade Sunday school teacher kneeling on the floor in front me, explaining words on my level. Church was where I sang in the choir, adopted additional grandparents, learned to bow my head for prayer, and caused after-school ruckus- building forts under the library tables and playing church-wide hide and seek. Church was our house. It was home. It always has been.

I am the daughter of six generations of Presbyterian pastors. The first time someone told me I should go to seminary, I was 15. I smiled in response, brushed their comment off with claims of being too young and reputations of preacher’s kids, but never forgot those words. I never forgot those words, because as far as I could tell, dedicating my life to a group of people that wanted to love the world as graciously and whole heartedly as they could, seemed like the best possible use of my energy that I could imagine.

I still feel that way. However, inevitably, my life, and thus my faith, is not as simplistic as it used to be. I have eaten with homeless people on street corners. I have watched my friends fight depression and cancer and broken hearts. I have been angry at God for the suffering in this world, and have ministered to more than one woman who fell victim to abuse. The world has threatened to pull my faith from me in moments of incredible heartbreak; however the world has also given me my richest understanding of faith in those same moments.

I have learned, that pain finds us like magnets. It is in our human nature. However, I have also learned, that there was a man named Jesus who tried to push that pain away, promising an unfading light for our darkest days. And I have learned that the church, when at its best, loves people, including those that are not its members, in a way that this world so desperately needs.

Thus, I feel called to work with and for the church, because I believe in the message of the gospel and the great ends of the church. If the opportunity arises, I would love to practice ministry through youth ministry, campus ministry, or new church development. However, ultimately, I just want to see another generation of children learning what forgiveness looks like. I want to see another generation of adults passing on wisdom, love, and prayers like families pass on lullabies and traditions; and I want to see a generation that one day knows the day better than the night. I am not a Christian because of one defining moment. I am a Christian because I have been given a life time of love. Thus, spending my life time loving and serving others, making church feel like their home too, only seems right.