

**A statement of my understanding of Christian vocation in the Reformed Tradition and how it relates to my sense of call.**

It is my understanding that Christian vocation, in the Reformed Tradition, is where God calls a believer into some form of ministry to the Kingdom and to all creatures on earth.

I believe God has called me into ministry to serve the people who are homeless. My experiences prior to seminary included working in homeless prevention and case management. When I became legally blind, and needed to change a career path, it was my faith in Christ that brought me to seminary to become closer to God, and to grasp a better understanding of my call to serving the children of God. After being waitlisted at another seminary, God directed me to Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York for a reason: to be with my community. Seminary continues to be a place that I have had time to discern the many avenues that God is opening for me to explore. As I have three years left of my dual-degree program in conjunction with Columbia University, God has been nudging and pushing me to take my dream of building a new worship community into life. Since January of this year, I have been working more closely with those who are homeless, living on the streets and park benches in New York City. I have begun talking about a new church plant with some people I have interactions with, and through those conversations have begun weaving together a plan for launching a new worship community, Cross Street Community, which will serve those who are homeless: runaway youth, victims of human trafficking and those who are spiritual but not religious.

I believe that my call is, and will be, challenging. I understand the discomfort others may feel that will come along with my call, as I believe I am being called to serve God and the Church on the streets, park benches, subway tunnels and prisons. God is preparing me for this journey, and I believe that every day, every challenge, every new person I meet has been sent by God to allow me to see more clearly God's call?

**A statement of what it means to be a Presbyterian with an indication of how that grows out of participation in the life of a particular church.**

I became a member of a small congregation in rural Northern New York in my early twenties. At that time, I did not understand Presbyterian traditions. In 1997, I was asked to volunteer with General Assembly being held in Syracuse. It was at the GA event that I had met so many nice people, and people who shared the same thoughts and mission. At that General Assembly, it became slightly clearer what it means to be a Presbyterian. Two years later, while dealing with a change in my relationship, it was the Presbyterian family that I got to know outside of my home congregation who were there for me. It was those people who allowed me to be who I am, without fear I was at home. When I am asked what it means to be a Presbyterian, I generally respond with, because it feels good.

I have learned in my short time that the Presbyterians are kind, welcoming, fun and just a good group of people with a longstanding tradition of loving and following God. I have been honored to serve in many leadership positions, including Moderator of this Presbytery and am currently serving as the National Organizer for the Presbyterian Network to End Homelessness.

I believe the church has made great strides in becoming inclusive. We are looking at different ways to do God's work and at new ways of continuing time-honored Presbyterian traditions. But it was at the onset of my experiences at Union that brought a clear understanding of why I am a proud

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Presbyterian. Attending an ecumenical, non-denominational institution with students and staff from many traditions, I am proud of our traditions, especially the rigorous requirements to become a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the PCUSA. While challenging, and well, challenging, I truly believe that as a Presbyterian I will come through seminary with a closer understanding of God, a deeper relationship with my call to ministry, and a strong educational background.

**A statement of self-understanding, which reflects my personal and cultural background, and includes a concern for maintaining spiritual, physical and mental health.**

I acknowledge my weaknesses, my strengths and my faith in God. I understand that self-care can, and should be, exercised and honored to the fullest extent. My spiritual exercises are practiced daily beginning with a morning devotional and prayer. During the day, I focus on controversial issues in mission, especially regarding strategy, and apply constructive theological thinking to them. My practice ends in the evening with silence, prayer and scripture. I see this exercise as a benefit to my ministry by keeping abreast of current situations, while remaining grounded in scripture, silence and prayer.

My practice includes a Sabbath. My Sabbath is on Friday, and this is a day that I devote to prayer, and as of late, disconnect from technology. My routine includes walking or the gym. I read a book that is not something I would generally read, and I attend art openings, and other activities around the city. My Sabbath does include my partner in the evening, as we have chosen Friday as our “date night”. Incorporating the Sabbath into my ministry affirms my call and balances my life.

I have established three support networks. The first is working intentionally with a therapist. The second is working with a spiritual director. The third is through a small group: The Interfaith Roundtable. This intentional group has six members of various faith traditions: Jewish, Catholic, Sikh, Muslim, Atheist and Christian.