

Mackie Bio & Sense of Call

I am a native of Farmington Hills, Michigan, and attended Wittenberg University in Springfield, OH, where I earned a Bachelor's of Arts in English and eventually a Master's of Science in Sports Management at Georgia Southern University. After spending a few years as a college softball and basketball coach, I responded to the call into the seminary and graduated in 2014 with a Doctorate of Ministry Degree from Ecumenical Theological Seminary in Detroit where I currently serve as an adjunct faculty member in the doctoral program.

I was hired by Rosedale Gardens Presbyterian Church as their Director of Youth Ministry in 2013 after a decade of volunteer service at nearby St. Paul's Presbyterian Church – the congregation in which I was born and raised. While at St. Paul's, I volunteered as both a middle school and high school youth advisor, led many Sunday school programs for all ages, planned and led Wednesday Evening fellowship programs, wrote VBS curriculum, and led Sunday worship as both liturgist and preacher.

In 2016 I began the process of becoming a Commissioned Ruling Elder and completed my certification through the Presbytery of Detroit. I was commissioned to the Ministry of RGPC in March 2018 where I serve as both a Commissioned Pastor and as the Youth Director.

One never knows what a day will bring in the life of a congregation. For the past 4 years, I have had the privilege of serving as a Commissioned Pastor to a vibrant, thriving and growing congregation, thus exposing me to a variety of daily tasks and situations as a minister. From the outside and from a distance, the tasks of Ministers of Word & Sacrament seem to be pretty black and white, much like they are laid out in the Book of Order. Like looking at a Monet painting, from a distance it forms a clear, concise picture, yet the closer you get to the work, you begin to see all the fine points and dots of the brush strokes that seem messy and unclear. Yet all together, it forms the work of ministry.

And ministry is not simply a well-ordered worship, or the celebration of the sacraments, or a dynamic program – ministry is being in the mess of life with others. It's receiving middle of the night texts of despair. It's another cancer diagnosis for a teenager. It's writing recommendations for admittance into medical school. It's taking out the trash and replacing toilet paper. It's learning how to minister in the midst of a pandemic. It's problem solving. It's admitting when you're wrong. It's being included in the joys of other's lives. It's a strict reliance on the Holy Spirit. It's a constant state of learning. It's presence. It's cooking meals. It's listening. It's humbling, both in its privilege and in the ways it puts a spotlight on your own inabilities, thus the need for Jesus.

I am grateful for the gifts God has given me, and especially grateful for the job I currently have that allows me to use these gifts. It has been made known to me by others that my specific gifts lie in preaching and teaching; an ability to connect and relate to teenagers; and discipleship through social ministry. I also believe God has gifted me with the ability to be bold and unafraid to plant seeds and craft new ideas for the church in a way that is Christ-focused.

Standing on the tradition of "Reformed and always reforming," I firmly believe that our churches need to be guided into areas of change that may seem uncomfortable at first, yet are necessary to make room for the Holy Spirit to move in and through the people. I do not believe in change for change, sake, but to change based on a call by God so that he may be glorified and his kingdom strengthened. And I believe he has given me the gift of discernment to be able to see when these changes are necessary, and the gift to articulate the need for change so that it is understood and successful.