

## Biography - Tommy Langejans

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Hello! My name is Tommy Langejans, and I am a candidate for ordination from Holland, Michigan. I grew up in Grand Rapids, Michigan, attending Forest Hills Presbyterian Church since I was born.

I grew up going to Sunday school, and once I hit middle school, I started to become more curious about God. Each month, our Sunday school teacher would ask us a big question, give us some potential answers, and then leave us to determine what we thought about it. This form of teaching made me extremely curious about how God worked, and made me want to ask my own questions so that I would know everything I could about God.

I stayed active in Sunday school, and eventually, youth group, where I learned from 4 main leaders and many volunteers over the course of 7 years. This diversity of people and ideas helped expand my understanding of God, and kept me engaged in Sunday night meetings and service trips. During all of this, I kept myself busy with saxophone, singing, becoming an Eagle Scout, theater, and serving in various ways at FHPC.

Going into college at Valparaiso University, I had no idea what I wanted to major in. I tried a few majors that didn't stick, and was left only with the knowledge that I wanted to do relational work with individuals and families. At the end of my sophomore year, my dad asked me what I enjoyed doing most at school, and I told him that I loved participating in music ensembles, taking theology classes, and attending and volunteering at campus worship services. My dad asked if I had considered becoming a pastor, and the idea struck me in a way that it hadn't before. After talking with pastors in my life, doing research, and praying a lot, I discerned a calling for pastoral ministry, and switched my major to Theology and Ministry (with a music minor). Shortly after starting my junior year with new classes, I knew I was where I was supposed to be. Getting to simultaneously major in theology, plan and leading morning prayer services, build relationships and community as a Resident Assistant, and participate in a variety of bands, choirs, and other musical groups, it felt like I was receiving the opportunity to grow in and express many of the ways God had been forming me for a long time.

After college came Western Theological Seminary and my Master of Divinity degree. I experienced an authentic, Christ-like community that held me well for the 3 years I was there, and which showed me how to hold others well in turn. I had friends and professors who challenged me in positive ways, helping me establish a firm foundation for what I believed about God and for considering different beliefs about God. I learned how to release the pressure of needing to know everything and help everyone, and developed good systems for taking care of myself. I served as a 5th and 6th grade youth ministry coordinator, and discovered a love for teaching that came alongside growing loves for preaching, worship leadership, and pastoral care.

I take those loves with me as I seek out this ordination into pastoral ministry, hoping to lead engaging and varied worship services, praise and teach God through the gift of music, steward learning spaces where different beliefs about God can coexist, build Christ-centered relationships within the church, faithfully serve the needs of the congregation, community, and world around me, and in all of it, extend pastoral care and love to those around me.