

**On Sunday, August 8<sup>th</sup>, Riverside members will play an important role in my Ordination to Word and Sacrament finalization process. As my home church, you are asked to affirm my call through a vote of confidence. The denomination asks for this vote simply to acknowledge that I am part of a local church who affirms my gifting for ministry and offers moral/prayer support and encouragement. I have written what follows to give a peak into my journey toward ordination in preparation for the vote on the 8th. I look forward to seeing you then!**



**Nicole McClurg**

Twenty-two years ago, I was sitting in the gathering space of our church in Minnesota listening to a friend share with me her plans to go to seminary. As I listened to her, I sensed God saying that I would do this as well. The revelation was completely unexpected. In fact, I rather easily dismissed it unable to wrap my mind around the possibility of seminary.

In the years following, God worked powerfully to heal wounds from an abusive past. I was also connected with others who lived in dynamic and very personal relationship with God and his Word. These experiences coupled with a breadth of ministry opportunities created a deep desire to build into the Church. Once again, I sensed God call me to seminary. This time I listened. At seminary, my passion for discipleship and sustainable, healthy ministry leadership only grew.

Since responding to God's call, I have completed a masters in Spiritual Formation and Leadership, certification in Spiritual Direction, and graduate level coursework through North Park Seminary. I began offering Spiritual Direction and retreat leadership in 2014. My passion for renewal in the Church continued to surface and it became clear that ordination to pastoral ministry was the next step. As a pastor I am called to build up the Church by encouraging, equipping, and empowering disciples to live life with God, loving him with all their mind, soul, strength, and body. I believe out of this relationship we grow in active love of neighbor.

The path toward Ordination to Word and Sacrament within the Evangelical Covenant Church has been long and often challenging yet God has been so faithful to provide along the way. This includes receiving a call to be Pastor of Spiritual Formation at Abundant Life Ministries (ALM) in 2019. ALM is a non-profit dedicated to empowering, equipping, and encouraging women and men called into pastoral ministry.

Through this call, I have been able to put my experience and gifts to use while making progress through the remaining requirements of ordination within our denomination. I am now in the finalization phase which means in the coming months, I will submit a paper which addresses several theological, ethical, and pastoral competencies. I will also engage in interviews with our regional and national ministerium boards. Finally, next June, there will be an ordination service to recognize, anoint, and welcome me as a member of the ECC ministerium.