

Statement of Call - Sweeney

God has called me to serve and love the local church as a Minister of Word and Sacrament. Since I was seventeen years old, I have worked for the church in some fashion, and predominately, that call is to work with children, youth, and young adults. I see this group in ways similar to what is learned in the parable of the Lost Sheep. For decades this group was the one lost sheep that was away and forgotten while the 99 were attended to, ensuring their needs, wants, and wishes were granted. They were pushed away from leadership, and their voices were stifled to allow “grownups” to make the decisions, and I’m not sure where that got us exactly.

As an ordained teaching elder, I look forward to serving the local church in various ways through my passion for worship, mission, and program ministry. The Book of Order states, “The focus of these affirmations is God’s grace in Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures. The Protestant watchwords—grace alone, faith alone, Scripture alone—embody principles of understanding that continue to guide and motivate the people of God in the life of faith.”¹

While serving in the church, I would like to challenge my church to look again and envision the traditional education model at the local church level to motivate them to believe that we are always reforming. By looking at the entire model, I’d work with the congregation of answering the basic question of, “does it serve our people today, or are we just repeating the same process as the generation before us?” With this new thought process, I aim to inspire volunteers to renew the lens through which they think about Christian Education and where we can meet people where they are instead of the formula “if we build it, they will come.”

I am passionate about working with the mission team at the local church level and abolishing the myth of the “white savior complex” and “serving poor people.” I have benefited

¹ Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). *Book of Order 2019-2021: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II* (p. 42). Kindle Edition.

from serving with some wonderful people who taught me what helping at the local, national, and international levels look like and how relationship-building is more critical than ensuring the task is done. I would like to develop proper entry and reentry programs for local churches when they have experience working beside someone in their community.