

Statement of Call

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Statement of Call: Describe the God that would call “you” into ministry. How do you sense a potential call to ministry for the function of Word & Sacrament? The statement should reflect a working knowledge of Christian vocation in the Reformed tradition.

Had someone asked me twenty, or ten, or even two years ago whether I truly believed I might be called into ministry, especially for the function of Word & Sacrament, I likely would have laughed the question off. While on paper I grew up on mission trips and Presbyterian summer camp with my local youth group, attended a Presbyterian college, spent my summers interning with faith-based nonprofits and local churches, and ended up in seminary, my own inner voices distorted the ways I envisioned myself as a leader, teacher, or pastoral counselor. I couldn't really be called into pastoral ministry, right? What if I don't know the Bible well enough? What if people don't trust me? What would my non-Christian friends think? And to top it all off, how many pastors do I know that are Asian *and* female?

In the ways that questions like these and others have persisted, even now as I move through the ordination process, I am so grateful that the God who calls me into ministry is not shaken or overwhelmed by my own insecurities. Rather, it seems that the longer I hold close both my doubts and my God, the more I am formed and held in ways I certainly couldn't muster on my own. When I think back to the story of my adoption, twenty-four years ago when I was left on the steps of an orphanage in China, to now, it is strikingly clear to me that from the very beginning, God ordered my steps and prepared communities of belonging for me before I could ever curate them for myself. From my home church community to my family to mentors and professors at Davidson to strangers and unhoused neighbors in Charlotte to host families in Spain, Japan, and others abroad, to unlikely friends and roommates at seminary, God has invited me to openness and curiosity and has shaped me to care deeply about the hearts of other people that God also loves. It has taken the encouragement of those around me, the persistent yet gentle

nudge of the Holy Spirit, and even a few months living across the world, to get me to the place of acknowledging what God has been stewarding in my life through the love and generosity of others all along. Now more than ever I have been experiencing God cultivate a desire in me to walk closely alongside others in *their* journeys of faith, tell others about the richness and beauty of the Scriptures and, according to the Book of Order, lift people's vision toward the hope of God's new creation (G-2.0501). In practice, I think this looks like continuing forward in the ordination process and becoming more familiar with our current systems of welfare on both macro-political and micro-clinical scales through Rutgers University's Master of Social Work program. This looks like continued leadership through APTS (the Asian Association at Princeton Theological Seminary) and engagement with the international community. This looks like pressing into the tensions, gaps, and potential partnerships between the church and the world through mission and outreach. In practice, this looks like leading and inviting college students and young adults into a rich and personal relationship with Christ through pastoral care, campus ministry, and discipleship. Perhaps, and to my own surprise, this even looks like formally preaching and teaching within a congregation as a pastor, pointing people back to the truth that they forever and always belong to God and to one another in Beloved community. In all of these ways and more I sense God's call, and I am profoundly grateful and astounded at the ways God has illuminated and stirred my heart in ways only God can. It is my deep hope that I might continue to discern God's good and trustworthy call over my life and would pay close enough attention that I would not miss what God has in store for me next.