



“My faith and love of Jesus Christ are at the center of all I do,” says Kellie Anderson-Picallo.

The television producer and writer, wife and mother of two says the past few years have been a time of tremendous change and spiritual awakening as ministry and theology became her passions.

“New York is where I’m supposed to be,” says the third-generation Presbyterian and Candidate for ordination under care of the Presbytery of New York City. “I value the partnership of Presbyterian support through **Auburn Theological Seminary** with the ecumenical emphasis and academic excellence of Union Theological Seminary.

“Seminary isn’t easy. To battle, deconstruct and challenge the very faith foundation that holds you together is exhausting. I’ve had to walk away from everything I believe – the cross, Jesus and even the sacraments – to have them all come back.”

Two things have helped Kellie build a more solid faith foundation: an advanced seminar on John Calvin, which included reading Institutes of the Christian Religion, and the Auburn staff, who assist Presbyterian students in navigating the PC(USA) ordination process and in understanding key issues facing our denomination.

When she graduates, Kellie sees herself as a pastor with close ties to a parish. She’d also like to continue to explore media and ministry.

“There’s a dearth of responsible voices in the religious media. Often what we hear is narrow and doesn’t speak for all Christians. Hopefully, my skills as a producer and respect for multifaith issues can widen this voice and offer a more balanced perspective.”

**I’m grateful
for the many women
before me who’ve
wrestled with diapers
and doctrine at the
same time.**



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Scott Sandahl, father of Cody Sandahl, graduated from **Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary** in May 2007. Scott was ordained as a minister of Word and Sacrament and installed as pastor of St. John's Presbyterian Church, Austin, Texas, on June 10. But just a few short years ago, Scott wasn't sure it was in God's plans for him to be a pastor.

"The only thing I knew was that I was supposed to do something in the church, other than being a pastor," Scott said. "Because it just seemed ludicrous that God would want me to be a pastor."

Cody, on the other hand, had been trying to get into seminary since high school. "Coming to the Seminary or being a pastor has been kind of in the back of my mind pretty much as long as I can remember," Cody said.

Scott feels their unique experience—attending seminary together—has been a good one.

"I have to tell you, though, one of my biggest blessings at the seminary has been having Cody here, for several reasons," Scott said. "I think we've gotten closer and we've bonded. As I like to tell people, we see each other in the halls and he gives me a hug instead of darting down another hallway."

Since his dad graduated, Cody has gotten married—his wife's name is Becca. Cody will graduate from Austin Seminary in May 2009. As of April 2008, he had only his Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) left for credits toward graduation. Cody plans to do his CPE at Seton Medical Center in Austin, Texas.

Scott has now been pastor of St. John's for nearly a year. "It has been challenging and rewarding," he said. "I am finding that my seminary education left me theologically sound and able to articulate what we believe and stand for."

There are many pairs of father and son pastors, but rarely do they attend seminary together. That is one thing that makes Scott and Cody Sandahl unique.



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It could have been Sunday school, Bible study or prayer services. Or it may have been the intercessory prayer ministry or young women's auxiliary missionary ministry. But the more Erika Rembert joined in these faith-filled activities, the more she discerned "the inner call of God to ministry."

Erika grew up inspired by a mother and grandmother who are actively involved in their home church as ushers, trustees, deacons, youth advisors – and more! Once she'd earned a degree in information systems from the University of South Carolina, Erika worked as a finance assistant and then as an accountant for a major bank. But church and family tradition kept calling to her.

So she stepped up her leadership role at Ebenezer Presbyterian Church in Dalzell, South Carolina, teaching youth Sunday school, serving as a liturgist and delivering the children's message every Sunday. She also began to think about a theological education. **Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary** at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta quickly moved to the top of Erika's list.

"You have an awesome ecumenical opportunity at ITC, as you prepare to be a parish pastor, to learn the tradition and polity of your own denomination alongside people from other denominations," Erika said.

"When I finish seminary, I hope to serve in parish ministry – ministering to God's people in the local congregation, community and world by serving as God's eyes, hands and feet."

**A parish pastor
is a minister of
reconciliation, filled
with the hope of
reconciling the world
back to God.**



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A former PC(USA) Young Adult Volunteer in Guatemala, Ellen envisioned herself serving God in the mission field or an established church stateside. At a family friend's suggestion, Ellen packed her bags and left South Carolina to pursue a degree at **Pittsburgh Theological Seminary**.

With a heart for mission, Ellen is a work-study student in the Seminary's World Mission Initiative office. Along with a group of PTS students she traveled to Southeast Asia. "On that trip, I discovered new gifts for ministry. Now I just have to process how I can use these gifts."

Seminary for Ellen has been an ongoing discernment process of how to incorporate her class work, experiences, and talents in her future ministry. "For now I'm thinking new church development. If you'd have asked me at the beginning of my studies what I would have wanted to do with my life, I would not have said 'new church development.' The fact that I'm considering that now is exciting."

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary's proximity to urban, rural, established, and new churches gives students like Ellen a variety of experiences. Having completed her field education in a 400-member traditional suburban church, Ellen opted to later serve as an intern with the Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community, an innovative emergent church on the city's South Side.

"When I came to the Seminary I thought I knew what I wanted, where I'd be, and that I was answering God's call. I've learned that although I'm answering that call by preparing for ministry, I need to keep being open to the call because it changes."

"My call is changing right before my eyes," said Ellen Dawson, M.Div. student at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.



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Listening to Dr. Tim Nonn, a 1986 graduate of **San Francisco Theological Seminary**, share his passion for helping the 2.5 million displaced civilians in Darfur would inspire anyone to join the fight against the genocide that has occurred in Sudan.

"Whenever I see any images or read stories about the people in Darfur, I become very emotional," said the Petaluma resident who used to turn away from horrific images of the African nation's internal turmoil. "I felt powerless and overwhelmed by the Darfur genocide; but as it turned out, it was God's purpose for me to help."

Nonn's inspiration for getting involved came in 2004 after watching a television program about Darfur, which featured a story about a Dafuri woman who had witnessed her husband's murder and the burning of her village. For a week, she walked across the desert with her three children until they reached a United Nations refugee camp. Nonn thought of his own son lying asleep in his bed, safe and secure, and he felt compelled to help.

So he published a letter in his local newspaper titled "Dear Sudan," articulating the need for awareness and relief. With support from Church World Service and the United Church of Christ, the letter launched the "Dear Sudan" movement and inspired Petaluma and other communities around the country to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for humanitarian relief in Darfur.

Dear Sudan:

We see your suffering, dying people. We refuse to turn away from genocide. We care enough to feed 55,000 refugees in Sudan for one day. That is the population of our community. We trust that other communities will do the same.

We strive to ensure that hundreds of thousands of Sudanese refugees who face death by starvation and disease will not have to die.

We know what it is like to be mothers and fathers, children and grandparents, friends and community. We also know that even though you are far away, you are just like us, mothers and fathers, children and grandparents, friends and community.

We are making a small contribution so that you may live another day. You may never know our names, and we may never know your names, but we are one.

Love, Petaluma (CA)

Nonn believes his master of divinity from SFTS and Ph.D. from the Graduate Theological Union gave him the biblical and theological grounding for his activism.

"The interplay of scholarship and community organizing allowed me to develop a process of action and reflection, which is essential for building coalitions and social movements."



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