

## Spiritual Autobiography

My faith journey is definitely a long story and one I enjoy telling, which makes it even longer. My start in my walk with God began in a small Catholic church in Cheshire, CT. Catholicism gave me a great Biblical background and reading the Word was a big part of my childhood. Masses were a time I loved and I loved hymnal worship. That being said as I moved into young adulthood some things about church didn't really click with me and as I moved to college I moved away from the Catholic faith. One thing that I think was really missing for me was community and emotional connection. Catholicism brought a lot of head knowledge and a lot of knowledge about the law and fear of God, but I didn't meet Jesus there.

As a college student, I began a process I affectionately refer to as "church shopping". I went to a lot of different denominations and then different versions within denominations and didn't really find what I was looking for. Then I lived and travelled overseas, between going to college and examined non-Christian religions. I think part of my love for Jesus was in seeing what life liked for people who did not know Jesus at all. All of this only to find my wife and find my church through my wife. Sarah brought me to a presbyterian church in Florida (Indian River Presbyterian) and I fell in love with certain aspects of the church. The music was a good blend of traditional and modern, the people were incredibly welcoming, the study and messages were rich and compelling. It was here that I learned about what it really means to ask Jesus to invade the entirety of the heart. After marrying we moved to Grand Junction, CO where we jumped in to Sarah's childhood church (First Presbyterian, Grand Junction) and the things I loved about Indian River were even more enriching here. One thing that really captivated us here was when we began working with the youth as volunteers. Our love for the children and youth of our church really compelled us and we quickly became part of the church family. In thirty years, the piece I felt I was missing was being part of a church family and that feeling of belonging as a member of the body of Christ.

In that time of church shopping, travelling and meeting my wife and finding a church, God also amazingly put a call to ministry on my heart. That call went from a blank "go to seminary" call and transformed into a call to not only learn how to be a pastor but also to learn how to specifically bring Jesus to youth and adults who are suffering from severe depression and suicidal ideation. Grand Junction is a beautiful place and we have met amazing people full of love, it is also an incredibly broken place that is being put on the national map for its high tendency for suicide. My heart is incredibly focused on the brokenness that children, teens, and families suffer from as a part of the brokenness they experience in our world today. One final comment on my past year in seminary, I find my heart being called to the trauma experienced by whole congregations while in the tail end and rebuilding of the revitalization process. In my limited experience, I have noticed that while the body comes together to rebuild they themselves have nowhere to go when addressing their own brokenness during this time of "double duty" for the working members of the church. I wonder what good might come from having pastor-counselors on hand to act almost as a "doctor that makes house calls" to those in need within the church during this process.

Now as a graduate with my M.Div and my MACO degrees I feel really well equipped to come and serve a church that has gone through a lot. We have taken a step of faith into our new community before beginning to serve and it has helped us a lot to get to know the Cumberland Valley and the people that make up this area. We are excited to serve this community and walk through new celebrations and new grieving as we all attempt to discover what church during and after COVID will look like and discern what God has in store for us all next and how the church and our community can come together and work towards a better and brighter tomorrow.

In Faith,  
Anthony Saturno

