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# GIVING BACK THROUGH LISTENING, LEADERSHIP, AND LAUGHS

During the difficult pandemic period of 2020 and 2021, the PTS students have bonded together to help each other through. One such source of strength is M.Div. student Christin Moreland.

Years ago, when her pastor encouraged her to consider vocational ministry, Christin decided, “Maybe I’ll go to seminary . . . but only if God pays for it!” She began to take the idea more seriously after stepping into lay leadership at her church and entering the PC(USA) inquiry process for ordination.

Still, the financial obstacles might prove to be prohibitive. But while other seminaries had some scholarships available, PTS financial aid was incredible, and Christin received a full scholarship. So, depending on one’s faith perspective, perhaps God was paying for seminary after all.

Christin has brightened the student community in at least three ways. First, she has leaned into classroom discussions that involve disagreement. She is interested in being able to voice different opinions, even about important topics like sexuality or the history of colonialism, while remaining in relationship.

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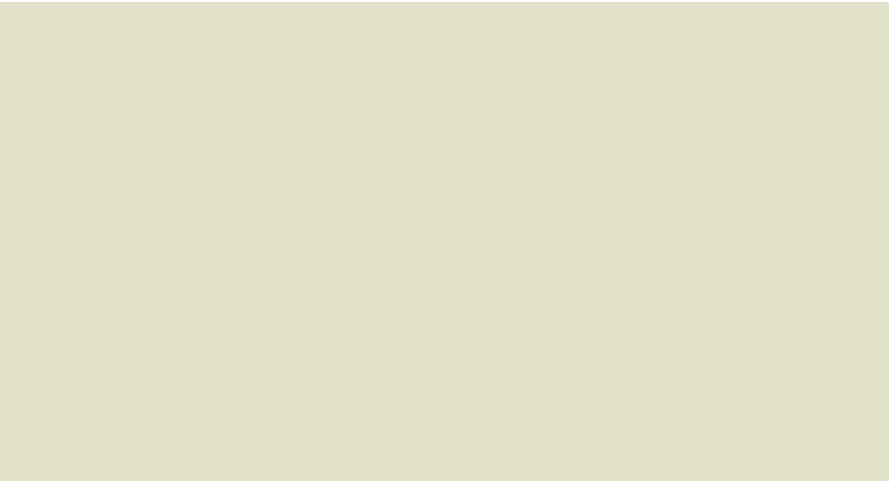
Her field education experience has helped her build these skills: “I have been serving in two congregations where the people are very different from me. I have come to love them like you wouldn’t imagine. They drive me insane sometimes, but I can see Christ in them.”

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Second, Christin has stepped into the role of Student Association president. She did not ask to be nominated, but her classmates must have seen admirable qualities in her as she faithfully participated in campus communities like the Rainbow Covenant, Women’s Caucus, and Seminarians United for Racial Justice. She is humbled and honored at this opportunity to help foster fellowship and move toward greater justice on campus.

Third, there are the Zoom backgrounds! Early in the pandemic, as a way to stave off feelings of isolation, Christin reached back to her high school years when she was interested in making art. She began producing weekly art pieces to place on the wall behind where she sits for Zoom classes. Some are serious, some are silly, but all bring creativity and smiles to the online class environment.

Christin is not sure exactly what the future holds, but she continues to discern in community whether she will serve as a parish pastor. To that end, she will continue her field education ministry with the two congregations, and will also pursue a hospital chaplaincy opportunity this spring. “Discernment is never really over,” she says. “It’s ongoing, always.”



Pittsburgh Theological Seminary  
616 North Highland Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
Phone: 412-362-5610



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