

## DISCERNING MINISTRY IN HER WHOLE LIFE

For senior M.Div. student Tara Fanton, going to seminary was not on her radar—not even close. She always planned that her career path would lead to elementary education since she grew up with many family members who were connected to teaching. So when college came around, she applied to Westminster College in New Wilmington, Pa., was accepted, and did the only thing she knew to do—elementary education.

And she disliked every single class.

“I’d leave the schools thinking ‘I don’t want to do this for the rest of my life’, but I had no idea what I’m supposed to do,” she says.



After meeting a few of the campus ministers, Tara decided to start doing campus ministry, facilitating small groups on ropes courses, and going on trips. This opened her life to other people, some of whom didn’t claim to be Christian. This claim of not being Christian caused her to struggle with what it really meant to be a Christian, and she could feel God transforming her life. During second term of her junior year, she switched her major to Christian education. Tara was terrified not knowing her future plans.

“I like structure,” she says. “I like to know what is going to happen, probably why I wanted to be a teacher because I would in charge and I was certainly not in control of this.”

Regardless of the switch in major, Tara graduated on time and started as the director of Christian education at a church in Washington, Pa. She loved her job working with the youth, but she could feel there was something more, though she didn’t know what. Four years later, in 2008, Tara started seminary part time and found that “something” to be preaching.

With graduation coming in May, she feels God is leading her in the direction of ordination, yet she sees that ministry isn’t just confined to a pulpit but to her whole life. For the past two years she and her husband, Wray ’12, have been trying to discern how to live out their ministries in their lives. To that end, the couple has been housing international students who are here to learn English. Though their home constantly transitions, it creates a multi-lingual, multi-racial, and multi-religious family.

“And we learn to not fight, but to live together and to experience how God is,” says Tara.

So whether from the pulpit or in her house, Tara is using her whole life to bridge the Word and the world.

Written March 2013

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