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### **GWU School of Divinity Helped Young Pastor Grow and Mature in Christian Ministry**

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# GWU School of Divinity Helped Young Pastor Grow and Mature in Christian Ministry

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Office of University  
Communications

August 1, 2017

## *Matt Rollins '11, '19 Left Engineering Career to Follow God's Call*

As a student in the School of Divinity at Gardner-Webb University, Matt Rollins soon discovered he had plenty to learn about church history, the Bible and pastoral ministry.

photo of Matt Rollins

The reading assignments were lengthy and writing papers was a challenge. Sometimes he questioned his decision to attend seminary while working. He didn't fully realize the value of his studies until after receiving his Master of Divinity in Pastoral Studies in 2011.

"I would never have set aside time to learn all of that information on my own, so I can now appreciate the rigorous workload set before me during my time at Gardner-Webb," Rollins reflected. "I didn't necessarily think this at the time, but looking back on those days and nights of reading, writing, and study, I am truly grateful."

His positive experience then brought him back to GWU to pursue a Doctor of Ministry in Christian ministries. Rollins, who lives in Greenville, S.C., felt God's call into pastoral ministry in 2003. He was a 27-year-old engineer who realized his passion was volunteering at church, so he started looking for a ministry position. "As luck, or God's timing, would have it, First Baptist (Greenville) was interviewing candidates for the position of recreation coordinator," Rollins elaborated. "With an athletic background and passion for sports, I interviewed and was hired. After a few years of finding a good rhythm in recreation ministry, I applied and was accepted into Gardner-Webb's divinity school."

Gardner-Webb School of Divinity

Divinity school requires commitment and flexibility, Rollins advised. "Be ready to see other forms and ways of doing ministry and to hear other views on theology and worship," he added. "Don't be surprised to ask yourself more than a few times why you ever enrolled in seminary. And be comforted that God's hand will be at work alongside you the whole time, helping you to grow and mature and expand your understanding of Christian ministry."

Rollins is now the minister of spiritual formation and outreach at First Baptist Greenville. In this role, he provides leadership to adult Sunday school classes and

First Baptist Church, Greenville, S.C.

their leaders and plans and implements opportunities for spiritual development. “The excellent general theological instruction I received at Gardner-Webb has enabled me to more competently and more compassionately provide leadership in several areas at First Baptist Greenville,” he explained. “My vision is to foster an environment of ministry and involvement that is easily identifiable and readily accessible to anyone seeking to worship God and follow Christ. I work to eliminate obstacles members encounter when trying to serve, to create inviting entry points for those seeking a church family, and to foster a climate of authentic worship and spiritual growth for all. As a minister of the gospel in general, I feel called to create space for God to do His work in the world.”