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Courtney F. Stamey '12 Comfortable Serving in Large or Small Settings

Courtney Finocchiaro Stamey '12 of Greensboro, N.C., is a bi-vocational pastoral resident who ministers in traditional, as well as unique settings. She divides her time between serving members of her congregation and working on a farm alongside of people with special needs. “My position has me with my feet in two places,” offered Stamey, an alumna of Gardner-Webb University. “In one, I learn about how to pastor in a large congregation, and in the other, I do intimate pastoral care with a small group of people.”

Courtney F. Stamey headshot

Her pastoral residency is at First Baptist Church in Greensboro, where she is responsible for assisting in worship, teaching classes, visiting members and leading a small group. Her other position is with Peacehaven Community Farm, a non-profit located on an 89-acre farm in Whitsett, N.C. Peacehaven’s mission is to “connect persons with special needs to the larger community through shared living and the work of a sustainable farm.” Stamey serves in a chaplain role and assists the adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who live there. “Sometimes this means going to the gym and sharing meals,” she expounded. “Other times, it is group reflection with the caregivers, and still other times it is a goat funeral.”

Stamey sensed God calling her to full-time ministry as a teenager. When she began her college search, a website pointed her to

Courtney F. Stamey in church

Gardner-Webb. “One of the reasons I selected Gardner-Webb as a potential school was because of the rigor of the religious studies program,” she reflected. “I came on a visit during my senior year of high school and I knew it was the right place, because it immediately felt like home.”

Gardner-Webb’s close-knit community provided opportunities to make lasting friendships with classmates, her golf teammates, the staff and faculty. She appreciated all of her professors in the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy. When she graduated and entered Wake Forest University School of Divinity (Winston-Salem, N.C.), she realized her GWU professors had given her the academic and spiritual foundation to succeed in graduate school. They challenged her to believe that her own opinions are valuable, shared ideas on missions, increased her understanding of the Hebrew scripture and shaped her

opinions on ethics. “Gardner-Webb’s professors helped me to ask the tough questions and break down my presuppositions,” she asserted. “The lessons I learned in these classrooms have transformed me into the pastor I am today.”