

Alumni Spotlight: Jonathan Feathers (DMin '12)



Current Title: Senior Minister, First Christian Church of Bluff City, TN; Part-time Teacher, Providence Academy in Johnson City, Tennessee

Family: Wife, Melanie; Children – Dorothy (10) & J.W. (3)

Favorite Professors: Dr. Haddon Robinson and Mr. Ray Blunt

Favorite Memory: I enjoyed the cohort meals and shared experiences such as site visits to Mt. Vernon and local businesses.

What have you been doing since you left Gordon-Conwell and where are you serving now?

Since leaving Gordon-Conwell, I have served and led within the local church. At the time of graduation, I was serving as the senior minister in a small local church in Waynesboro, Virginia. From there, I transitioned to an associate minister in a large local church in Johnson City, Tennessee. While in the associate role, I was involved with preaching, teaching, adult Christian education, involvement, and pastoral care. Upon the conclusion of that ministry, I resumed serving and leading in a senior minister role at First Christian Church of Bluff City, Tennessee.



What do you love about your work? What are the particular joys and challenges of serving a rural church?

While at Gordon-Conwell, I discovered my life's mission, which is to lead people in a growing relationship with Jesus. I love doing just that. I have been able to preach, speak, and teach in front of audiences of all ages in churches ranging in size from less than 100 to over 2,000 members. It is my hope and prayer that people will discover a next step in their faith journey. Having served in small and megachurches, urban and rural, each strive to "make disciples." Churches of any size struggle and wrestle with the same kinds of questions regarding the future of the church. In a rural church, there is often a realization of limited resources, so ministry challenges us to be creative. The rural church tends to be more family-focused, which allows for intergenerational opportunities.



How has God woven together your Gordon-Conwell education with other life events to bring you to where you are now?

Gordon-Conwell has helped me be more in tune with and confident in how God has equipped me to serve and lead within the local church. Gordon-Conwell has helped me realize the power of the Holy Spirit working within the history of the church and how I can better serve and lead where God has placed me. Gordon-Conwell encouraged me to reflect upon my own leadership journey and see where it is God is leading me.

How has your Gordon-Conwell education served you in your past and current work?

Gordon-Conwell equipped me to investigate and explore the need for servant leaders by looking at Jesus and the Scriptures. Gordon-Conwell challenged me to continue developing as a leader. For instance, I became certified as a *Lead Like Jesus Facilitator*, where I have utilized those resources within the local church. I have an increased awareness of the Creation/Fall/Redemption/Restoration paradigm. I find myself reflecting and asking others as to how they can carry the message of redemption.

What piece of advice would you give to young alumni who are just entering pastoral ministry?

For those beginning pastoral ministry, I would challenge them to "keep their eyes on Jesus." Ask questions within the local church to discern where it is and where it needs to be. It is acceptable to ask for help and resources as there are others who are following Jesus. I often say that discipleship is following Jesus daily together.

Do you have any publications or links to share?

Since graduating, I have contributed to the *Standard Lesson Commentary* along with other Sunday School lessons and articles. I have published two books, [*New Wine into Old Wineskins*](#), which is a resource for a minister beginning in an established church, along with [*So Tell Me*](#), which is a resource for ministry candidates to ask questions and reflect upon when interviewing with a church or parachurch organization. Both books were published by Resource Publications, an imprint of Wipf & Stock Publishers.