

Lisa Culpepper (MDiv '07, DMin '13)



Current title: Reverend Dr. Lisa Culpepper

Family: Husband, Dr. David Culpepper; daughter, Lauren Cohn (married to David Jay); and son, Daniel Culpepper

Favorite professor: Dr. Steve Klipowitz and Dr. Tim Laniak

Favorite class: Biblical Theology

Favorite memory: I always looked forward to Saturday chapel, a time of refreshment, worship and encouragement.

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

Since leaving Gordon-Conwell, I have been serving as the pastor of small Presbyterian churches. I am also serving as a trustee for a mission organization, The Outreach Foundation and have taken several trips with them to Cuba, Lebanon, and Syria. Currently, I serve as interim pastor of Mt. Horeb Presbyterian Church in Lexington, KY. I am also on volunteer staff with Peace Catalyst International.

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

I love the loving family spirit and resilience of small churches. Members of small churches wear multiple hats as they share the responsibilities of worship and service. It is a real joy when a small church reaches beyond her doors and into the community. I have discovered that God can do big things through a small church. The challenge of small churches today is their aging population and declining numbers. This causes many to become afraid and insular.

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

My Gordon-Conwell education has opened doors to ordained ministry in the PCUSA. I have had opportunities to serve in pastoral leadership through teaching, preaching, and serving on boards and committees that I would have



Alumni

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never had otherwise. My doctoral degree through Gordon-Conwell has also opened doors for publishing, leading conference workshops, and speaking as I seek to lead small churches in networking in mission.

What has been Gordon-Conwell's biggest impact/influence on your ministry?

The greatest impact of my Gordon-Conwell education has been the marriage of ordained ministry with a global vision. The rural church has not generally been included in global ministry, but through my experience and cross-cultural travels, I have found that the small rural church has much in common with the global church and much to learn from other small churches who serve in difficult places.

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

Upon my graduation from Gordon-Conwell, a notable pastor and friend advised me, "Do what is right in front of your nose." In other words, follow where God leads in the immediate present.

Also, take time to listen and learn from your context (people and ministry setting). This learning time will prove to be a valuable extension of your academic experience. Maintain an attitude of humility so that you can learn from the people you serve. Learn what is important to them and value their wisdom and experience. Consider your calling to a rural church, not as a steppingstone to something larger. Consider it an opportunity to discover how powerfully God works with small things.

Do you have any publications or links to share?

I have a 2021 publication based upon my doctoral work in Missions and Cross-Cultural Studies through Gordon-Conwell: [*Together is Better: How Small Membership Churches Follow God's Missional Call Through Partnerships.*](#)