

## Alumni Spotlight: David Ouellette (MDiv '18)



**Current Title:** Pastor, North Woolwich Methodist Church

**Family:** wife Esme; children: Aaron, Paul, Rachel, Jane, Sarah (ages 24-15)

**Favorite Professors:** Roy Ciampa, Jeff Arthurs, John J. Davis

**Favorite Class:** The Use of the Old Testament in the New (Ciampa)

**Favorite Memory:** Dr. Davis teaching on what the Trinitarian doctrine of *perichoresis* suggests about the ultimate nature of our salvation and becoming so choked up that he had to turn his back for close to a minute to regain composure. Moments like this were a priceless reminder that we were not just in a class.

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

I was a full-time pastor while I attended seminary halftime from 2012-2018 and currently continue in the same position. The North Woolwich Methodist Church is a rural church in the Midcoastal region of Maine.

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

I absolutely love the community that God has allowed me to serve. Remaining in a smaller church for more than 3-5 years makes room for so much more relationship with the people you serve. As you study and prepare sermons, as you make policy and strategic plans, you cannot help but think about the actual daily lives of the church. Your church members are also your friends, your neighbors, your kids' friends' parents, and one another's employers and employees. With such multilayered and close relationships, there is no chance of faking anything. It is real ministry in real relationship "or else." This is the challenge of authenticity, but it brings the unique joys of authenticity.

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

I started my seminary education in my late 30's just as I returned to the U.S. after 12+ years doing mission work in Russia. While I would not necessarily recommend waiting so long to others, returning to seminary as a more mature person with significant experience in ministry made it a much



richer experience. Classes were not merely academic issues or information, because I had been in situations where the insights shared would have made a difference. More than anything, the broad exposure to other Christian traditions and the constant challenge to think more deeply about what Scripture actually teaches were rejuvenating. Ruts were plowed out and bad or sloppy habits in study and preaching exposed. I feel I was given a whole new collection of tools with which to approach God's Word and people.

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

In pastoral ministry we all are called to wear so many hats, but I think over time we tend to stay true to what first drew us into ministry. For me, that has always been the study of God's Word and the attempt to grip people's hearts with the splendor of that Word in preaching. For this, I feel that Gordon-Conwell was a perfect fit. The strong emphasis on original language exegesis, biblical theology, and the intentional craft of communication were just what I was looking for. These were not required classes, but grounding in concrete skills that I continue to develop and sharpen since they are the skills that I use every week.

### **What advice would you give to young alumni who are just entering pastoral ministry?**

Advice to those entering pastoral ministry: HUMILITY! You are not entering "pastoral ministry." You are entering a specific church filled with real people who were there long before you and will probably be there after you. It is not your church; it is their church, and you *serve* them. You have some skills and a role that God has given you, but he has done that for *their benefit*. They are not the raw materials for you to "have a successful ministry." Put down roots, be real, walk with your people not as "The Pastor," but simply as one of them as we all try to stumble along after Jesus.

### **Links:**

Learn more about [North Woolwich Methodist Church](#).