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**Finding the Right Road**

Like many people, the Rev. Meg Shoeman needed time to find the right road, the right path for her life.

Meg, who earned her M.Div. from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in 2007, candidly confessed that hers has been a “very long journey.” She left the ordination process after graduation and chose another career path because of the constitutional prohibition of gay and lesbian ordination.

“After graduation, I started working at an animal shelter,” she said. “I remember walking down the steps of the shelter one day and having this fleeting thought that church is a thing of my past. It was crushing.”

Not long after, Meg reentered the ordination process under care of [Market Square Presbyterian Church](https://www.marketsquarechurch.org/) in her hometown of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and interned at Penn State Health’s Hershey Medical Center. She later accepted a full-time call at Children’s Hospital of Alabama in Birmingham, to which she was ordained in 2018.

Although the position was a great fit, the culture wasn’t. A little more than a year later, Meg decided to return to Harrisburg.

“I came back with the idea of seeking a call,” she said, “but it didn’t happen. COVID happened. Just to make some money, I was working part-time at a coffee shop, and also in a temporary pastoral position at the Market Square Church. When COVID shut the coffee shop down and I didn’t have my normal source of income, that’s when I knew I really needed some financial help.”

The Rev. Cheryl Galan, interim executive presbyter for the Presbytery of Carlisle, was standing by. “When I learned that Meg was struggling financially, I could not imagine the stress she was under. I thought immediately of the [Assistance Program](https://www.pensions.org/your-path-to-wholeness/assistance-program) of the [Board of Pensions](https://www.pensions.org/). Her circumstances made her an ideal candidate for an Emergency Assistance Grant.”

Now that the pressure on Meg to meet her basic living expenses has been alleviated, she intends to focus on discerning her next call.

Throughout her journey, Meg said that in addition to her presbytery’s active support and encouragement, the “Merton Prayer” by Thomas Merton has also helped to keep her centered. In the prayer, Merton confessed to having no idea where he was going but knowing that God would lead him by the right road.

Thanks, in large part, to the Christmas Joy Offering, Meg believes she is now on that road — the right road.

“I am grateful for the generosity of Presbyterians, whose Christmas Joy offerings make it possible to provide support and sustenance to those like Meg, whom God has called,” said presbytery’s interim executive. “Such gifts bring essential peace of mind and demonstrate our gratitude for God’s gift, in the Christ child.”

Please give generously to the Christmas Joy Offering, for when we all do a little — it adds up to a lot.

***Let us pray:***

*Make the way plain that leads to your help, O God. Open the doors of hope in our lives.* ***Amen****.*