

Rob McAlister

Executive Summary

Summer 2011

Hickory Grove Presbyterian Church

This summer I spent my Lilly internship at Hickory Grove Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, NC. Located in East Charlotte, a neighborhood that has demographic-wise changed dramatically over the past two decades, this small and struggling church had just begun a three-year transformation process with the goal of once again becoming a relevant church for the neighborhood it found itself in. As the summer ministry intern I learned from Pastor Kate Murphy in a shadowing capacity, accompanying her on multiple visits and sitting in on meetings with the Elders of the church and the prescription advisor. I participated in a weekly bible study, created the lesson plan for the elementary age Sunday school, gave the children's sermon multiple Sundays, shared the prayers of the people once, gave the benediction once, and delivered the sermon on July 17th. In addition, I was the on site activities coordinator for the Freedom School at HGPC. A program started by the Children's Defense Fund, Freedom School provides a summer camp type atmosphere for high-risk children of low-income families in an effort to help the youth maintain grade reading level. Twice a week I was tasked with providing the activity and volunteers for the afternoon for the children. I also had breakfast with the Freedom School Scholars each morning and participated in Harambee—an African word meaning "let's pull together"—which was a morning gathering meant to excite the scholars and instill a communal love of reading. My supervisor was Pastor Kate Murphy who guided me through weekly theological reflections designed to deepen my discernment process. In addition, I participated in a weekly reflection group at my home church, which provided community and instant feedback on my day to day throughout the summer. Functioning in a manner similar to the Lilly group that bookended my summer, my study group at my home church allowed for sharing and reflection to co-exist. My summer stretched and challenged me in ways

I had not experienced, and provided an excellent foundation upon which to continue my seeking of God in the vocation that I choose.