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Worship Pastor Serving His Childhood Church

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- Brandon Slifer has felt called to full-time vocational ministry for as long as he can remember. But serving as worship pastor at the church where he grew up has been more than what he could have asked or imagined.

When Slifer started attending Vandalia Baptist Temple in Vandalia, Ohio, in fifth grade, his Sunday school teacher introduced him to the guitar.

"He showed me how to play and actually helped pay for my first guitar," said Slifer.

When he joined the youth ministry, Slifer began leading worship with the student band. By freshman year of high school, he was playing in the orchestra every Sunday. And in his sophomore year at Cedarville University, he began working with his worship pastor through an internship.

Slifer, who graduated in 2020 with degrees in worship, youth ministry and Christian education, was soon faced with a new challenge.

"In the middle of my field experience, the worship leader left," said Slifer. "It went from an internship where I was working with the worship leader to an internship where I was the worship leader."

Slifer was asked by the lead pastor to join the leadership team and oversee different parts of their music ministry. As a sophomore in college, he began to balance multiple responsibilities.

"It was definitely exhausting. There were a lot of times when I felt like I had to put my head down and just get through it," said Slifer. "I would get all my homework done and then I would shift to getting stuff done for the church."

Support from his church family and friends at Cedarville helped him to persevere. His pastor would lead worship on Wednesdays so Slifer could stay on campus to study.

"He told me that my focus, in that period of time, was on learning and growing and being prepared for a lifetime of ministry, not just doing ministry now," said Slifer.

Taking ministry classes in Cedarville's school of biblical and theological studies while ministering in his church was instrumental in preparing him for full-time service. From planning worship services to developing teaching lessons, the overlap between Slifer's education and ministry position was invaluable.

"I could apply almost all of my assignments at the church," said Slifer.

When Slifer graduated, he transitioned from part time to full time at the church. And several months later, he was ordained by his church based upon the recommendation of a pastoral council that included the lead pastor and youth pastor from Vandalia Baptist Temple. Members of his church family, many of whom watched Slifer grow up, gathered to affirm his call to ministry.

“What greater joy than to preach and teach God’s Word?” said Slifer. “I get to spend my life devoted to gospel ministry, and I love it.”

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,550 undergraduate, graduate and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, including its [Bachelor of Arts in Worship](#) program, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings and high student engagement ranking. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.

Written by Tessa Landrum