

continued

nipeg, I was the youth minister at my home church," he said.

"It gave me a chance to have one foot in the ministry and one foot in the academic world. And I really felt a sense of call and sense of purpose in ministering."

After graduating with his Bachelor of Arts in 1999, Lockhart headed east and started working on his Master of Divinity degree at Emmanuel College on the campus of the University of Toronto.

Over the next four years, he had stints with the chaplaincy at Toronto Western Hospital and youth ministry at Royal York Road United Church, spent a month on a mission in Kenya working at refugee camps and in the southern Sudan ministering in the civil war zone, completed a year's internship at Cole Harbour, N.S., and returned to Toronto to complete his studies in 2003.

He married Laura in May 2002. They were both studying to become ministers and were ordained in 2003.

Lockhart and his wife received their first posting in Dryden, a city of about 4,000 people located halfway between Winnipeg and Sault. Ste. Marie.

"It was a good place to be for my first church because it was a very busy church with lots of weddings, funerals and baptisms, wonderful

people and good fishing too," he said.

His wife has been on maternity leave since their daughter, Emily, was born 13 months ago and she is now discerning ministry opportunities in the Quinte area.

As much as the couple liked Dryden in their two years there, "the pull to southern Ontario was stronger and stronger especially because of Laura's parents working in Niagara Region."

They settled on Belleville after St. Matthew's had initially approached Lockhart about filling the position.

It was a good decision to come here, he said.

"One of my passions is working with young adults, especially those without a church connection. And for me, it's a lot of fun to grow churches."

In ministering with young adults, Lockhart said it's important to break stereotypes of what it means to be a Christian, "that you can be normal and be a Christian at the same time."

"I really believe that people have a thirst for spirituality and I am very passionate about connecting the gospel with popular culture."

Lockhart is intent on helping his congregation understand how faith issues are relevant issues in today's society.

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