# An amended version of the statement Rev Naomi Young-Rodas made at her Ordination and Induction service on 2 November 2019

I was kind of born in the church – not literally, but as I was born on the Sunday before Christmas I made my father late for the afternoon carol service and my sisters didn’t know of my arrival until he announced it to the whole congregation, – just down the road from here in Hadleigh.

I have been a life-long member of the URC, having become a member at Billericay URC, and an elder for 14 years at what was until recently St Columba’s (now Downing Place URC) in Cambridge.

Soon after leaving school I volunteered with the World Council of Churches in Switzerland. And after finishing my degree in linguistics I ended up teaching English in Guatemala, but very soon moved to working with the Presbyterian Church there. It was the final years of the civil war and one of my colleagues, a local minister, was kidnapped and murdered. I was involved in spreading the word to Europe and the USA, and although the case was taken up by Amnesty International, the military perpetrator was never brought to justice. I also worked at their theological college, led Bible studies, helped market handicrafts and taught Sunday School to a group of small children in a local church. Later I worked for a charity run by the Presbyterian Church (USA) in Texas, serving mostly immigrants escaping violence in Central America.

When I returned from America, I found an administrative job at the University of Cambridge, where I ended up staying for many years. But I came to realise that I had always felt more fulfilled when I was working with or for the church, trying in some small way to make the world a better place and make a difference in people’s lives. So, after talking to many people both within the church and friends who are not religious at all, I came to the conclusion that I should investigate a call to ministry, which was supported by the Synod and I studied for four years at Westminster College in Cambridge. I completed my studies in June and we began the process to see if a move to Rayleigh was right – and it was!

Naomi

November 2019