

I was born in upstate New York and although I was baptized in the Episcopal Church my parents rarely attended. I found at the age of 8 that my walks with my mother in the Alleghany mountains started a search in my mind as to who made this beautiful place that provided an adventure for me everyday day. I also attended an after school Bible study out of this sense of wonder and gratitude and found that the flannel board retelling of the Old and New Testaments provided enough answers to these questions to begin my journey of faith following Jesus. As a teenager, I moved quite frequently, from New York to Florida to Georgia and finally Tulsa, Ok, throughout I attended youth groups spanning a broad range from Baptist to Catholic and even for a brief time an LDS congregation. While all these churches had offered me fellowship and an opportunity to share my early forming faith, I often felt the disappointment of one pastor called "Christianity Plus" requirements.

As I was settling in to my studies at Tulsa University as a Criminal Justice major at the time I had a deep calling to serve others in some form or fashion. At this time I was deeply motivated to in conversations with formerly churched Christians and others as I encouraged them back to an understanding of Jesus Christ, His presence in the Holy Spirit, and his claim upon us that His Church was trying to convey but at times more and less effectively. Finally during this time I found a new church development near my family home in Jenks, Oklahoma that came to be named St. James Presbyterian Church. I was relieved to find the pastor, H. O'Neal Dancer, was just as authentically interested in my faith story as he was teaching and preaching. When I asked what it took to join I was impressed by his answer, "Faith in Christ and the rest will be a sharing of my own faith journey with the understanding and traditions of others in the church.

I soon was found myself involved in teaching at St. James and as I continued to grow in my understanding of how God had used these moments and others in my life, I decided that I would change my major to religion and pursue a call to serving as an ordained pastor. I found the transition to Seminary, while challenging, to be an uplifting and formative time in my life. At the University of Dubuque I found a school that focused on preparing pastors for local ministry, gave a thorough understanding of the historical mission of the PCUSA and the Christian church in general, and most importantly for me the school was small enough to foster each students sense of call in thorough way. Also it was on a practicum assignment that included travelling to South Korea that I met my wife who after a year of correspondence agreed that I might be worth the risk and the struggle of moving to the United States to marry me.

Since then, we have served 6 congregations in as many states, had two wonderful children who have helped us to grow as much as we have helped them, served in the US Navy chaplaincy for 20 years, and now find ourselves ready and blessed to continue this adventure of faith following Christ's lead in Jacksonville, NC., a congregation that we see complementing our understanding that Christ is to be encountered in community just as much as within the walls of the sanctuary and is also seeking to revitalize its connections with those who serve the military and those whose lives are blessed by the richer variety of people and backgrounds that living in such a community affords. As always I am looking forward to coming alongside this congregation as we grow together in our journey of following Jesus.