

Hello Kenmore UMC! I want to introduce myself as your new Pastor of Discipleship and Outreach and share that I am very excited about God's call to serve with you. Part of my excitement surrounds meeting many new names, faces, and hearing stories. We each have a story about how God has blessed us. As I anticipate coming to know yours, I've been asked to share parts of my journey with you.

I know myself as a joyful and redeemed child of God through the incredible grace of Jesus Christ. And it took my husband Eric's request many years ago that we "marry in a church" for me to return to my childhood faith. I grew up in Stow, Ohio in an ecumenical environment where my father was Southern Baptist and my mother attended a community church that is now part of the Disciples of Christ denomination. I have one sibling, Rob, who is retired U.S. Secret Service. We moved a half dozen times across the country and back for my dad's job in the aerospace industry; and my favorite places to live are Holland, Michigan and Buffalo, New York.

I enjoyed history, social studies, and playing sports in my youth. In my college years at Allegheny College, I played tennis and shared a national ranking as a doubles player. After obtaining my undergraduate degree in Political Science, I chose to forego law school and moved to Buffalo where I obtained a M.S. in Organizational Communication at UB. I taught tennis professionally at this time, and it was through my doubles partner that I met Eric, my spouse for 28 years. Eric attended Alfred University and works in operations at Rosina Food Products. We have two children, Ross and Lissy (short for Elizabeth) who are 26 and 23, respectively. Ross lives in Buffalo and works as a Behavior Analyst at The Summit School with autistic youth, and Lissy is a professional equestrian rider/trainer living in Rhode Island. Last, but not least, we have an adorable Golden Retriever named Smudge (yes, there's a story behind that name, but I will save it for later).

I heard my call to ministry in my late thirties. At the time, I thought that God must be kidding or be mistaken. Some five years later, and after we had moved to Springdale, Arkansas for Eric's job, I started divinity school in Tulsa, OK. Upon returning to Eric's boyhood hometown of East Aurora some four years later, I transferred and finished my M.Div. at Colgate Rochester Crozer (same place as Pastor Matt).

I've always known my call was to the Order of Deacon. I am passionate about social justice, pastoral care, and disciple formation/education. My UMC experience has been as a Stephen Ministry Leader, chaplain at Roswell Park Cancer Institute, and chaplain at Hospice Buffalo, where I did home care, nursing home care, and was the chaplain for the children's program. I have been involved with Christian Education as an author, speaker, and adjunct professor and counsel youth and families. At Baker Memorial UMC, where my journey began as a Methodist, I started our Visitation Team, Dementia Respite Care Program, and recently a new faith community for millennial singles/couples and young families with children.

Now as the Holy Spirit has often done in my life, I have been called elsewhere--to Kenmore UMC. I am so filled with delightful anticipation and energy to meet you all, hear of God's actions in your stories, and see what wondrous things to which God calls us to do together in making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Yours in Christ, Rev. Becky Naber