

2022 Appointment

**Messiah United Methodist Church
Associate Pastor
Plymouth, Minnesota**



**Introducing
Rev. Bethany Nelson**



David Bard, Interim Bishop
Dan Johnson, Twin Cities District Superintendent

Education

- NonProfit Church Leadership, Dakota Wesleyan University
- MDiv, Luther Seminary
- BA, Religion & Communication Studies, Hamline University

Ministry Experience

- Park UMC - Brainerd and Emily UMC, Co-Pastor; 2019-Present
- Homestead UMC - Rochester, Co-Pastor; 2015-2019
- Bethel Lutheran Church - Lester Prairie; 2011-2015
- St Cloud VA Health Care System; 2010-2011
- St Olaf College Student Congregation; 2008-2009

Continuing Education and Training

- Shmita, MN Annual Conference, 2022
- Zoom Tomb: Easter Reflections, Karoline Lewis, 2021
- Future Church Summit, Fresh Expressions, 2021
- Planning for a "Digital First" Church, 2020
- YCWI AntiRacism Webinar, 2019
- MN Annual Conference, Covenant Leader Training, 2019
- Stepping Up to Supervision, Susan Beaumont, 2016
- MAC Church Planter Clergy Cohort, 2015-2019
- School for Congregational Development, 2012 & 2015

Service and Community Involvement

- Board Member, Young Clergy Women International 2020-Present
- Founding Member, BLA Antiracism Conversation, 2020
- Board Member, Minnesota Conference Board of Pensions, 2019-present
- Board Member, We ARE Clinic, Brainerd, 2019-Present
- SW MN Equipping Congregations Board, 2012-2015
- Board member, Friends of the Le Sueur Public Library 2012-2015

Call to Ministry

As a young child, I remember vividly standing in worship as Father Kinzer presided over communion. He raised the host and chalice, chanting the liturgy: *thru him, with him, in him – in unity with the Holy Spirit, all power and glory are yours forever and ever.* He knelt before the altar and I was overcome with a deep sense of knowing: *one day, I will do that too.* A young Protestant girl in weekly mass at my local Catholic school – this may not be a common moment of transformation. But I knew then that I would be a pastor. I played church the same way that many young kids

played school. When I was about 7 years old, I dressed as a pastor for Halloween. My call to ministry was revealed early in life and set the course for decades of preparation. For me, my discernment was less about whether or not I was called to ordained ministry but how I would uniquely live out my call.

Eventually, this discernment led me to the United Methodist Church. Early in our marriage, my spouse and I made the intentional decision to invest in our UMC colleagues and conference. We built and strengthened relationships across the connection, and actively sought to build community within the UMC. At the time, I was ordained and serving in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. However, a unique opportunity came to us to be appointed together.

And it was here, at another communion table, with another gathered community, that I felt a deeper sense of the call God had placed upon my life many years before. I soon came to discover that the beliefs and practices of the UMC (especially around communion, grace, and connectionalism) resonated deeply and gave voice to my own central beliefs.

Passion for Ministry

My heart song is always found in bringing people together to build authentic relationships across generations and to equip people to live out their faith in simple & everyday ways. My faith and leadership are rooted firmly in relationships. I am most passionate about helping others discern and live into an *embodied* faith.

Spiritual Disciplines and Study

I stay in love with God in a number of ways: through reading, spending time in reflection, participating in clergy covenant groups, and by keeping sacred space in my life for those who matter most: my children, spouse, family and friends.

Gifts for the Ministry

My faith and ministry are rooted in relationships. Ours is an embodied faith as we experience and share Christ in our love and care for others. Building personal relationships is one of my greatest gifts for ministry. I enjoy meeting new people, hearing their stories, and am excited to build relationships. I'm able to share of my own experiences and stories to better connect to others and bring folks into our story of faith.

I'm a strategic thinker who is future-oriented and love working with others to bring a shared vision to fruition. I have developed gifts for supervising staff and lay leaders and find joy in helping them develop their own gifts and passions for ministry. Worship was where I heard my call for ministry,

and through small groups that call deepened. As such, both are important aspects of ministry, where I bring energy, creativity, and authenticity.

As a leader, I am collaborative, encouraging, creative, and optimistic. I take initiative, am gracious towards others, and eager to create and develop new ideas.

Vision of the Church

Church has been an integral part of my life - offering friendships, service opportunities, comfort and healing during hard seasons, and a place of belonging and connection. Church is not *just* my vocation or profession; it has been at the root of every area of my life.

My vision of church is that we be a people who use our time and gifts to bring this same opportunity to others. To be a people that offer belonging and companionship, who bring Christ's hope and healing, who are authentic and loving. To be a people of joy and curiosity. I believe the church has much to offer our communities and world and is called to grow and challenge ourselves to meet the changing needs therein.

Family

My spouse, Luke, is an Elder in the UMC. We have three boys: Calvin (8), Josiah (6), and Desmond (3). They are kind, sweet, and curious with lots of energy! They love dance parties, Legos, and video games, and any chance to play outside and meet new friends. My parents and brother live in Osakis. My sister lives in Roseville.



Contact Information

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