

Pastor Barb

I am not a native Kansan and I did not grow up in The United Methodist Church or any church. Rarely did we attend worship as a family. So, I understand how easy it is to drift away from a faith community and feel that the church and whatever might happen on a Sunday morning is not particularly relevant. Far too often the church has not created meaningful engaging worship opportunities that convince marginal Christians that God loves us, just as we are but chooses to help us become more. God intends for us to grow: ever closer to God and one another. That can happen anywhere, of course, but it happens best within a faith community. Since I understand we are all consumers and have high expectations for that which we choose to consume, worship must be compelling. Preaching has to be relevant and engaging. We all should leave worship feeling empowered to live differently. Worship and preaching are a priority for me. I am always working on a sermon. I am always planning the next sermon series. I am always wondering what it is that God would have me say at this moment to these particular people. I grew up in Kirkwood, Missouri, a suburb of St. Louis, graduating from Kirkwood High in 1969. I gladly headed 285 miles west to Lawrence, KS to attend The University of Kansas. It was in Lawrence, at First United Methodist Church with Rev. Ron Sunbye preaching, that I learned worship could indeed speak to my heart and soul and be relevant to the events going on in our world. It was also in Lawrence that I met John Clinger, who continues to teach me about Kansas and how to live out my faith. We married in 1973 and both began teaching careers. I taught for seven years in Basehor and the Shawnee Mission School District. Then, for nine years I stayed home with our son, Jeff, and our daughter Rebekah. When they were both in school, I returned to teaching for the next thirteen years serving as a sixth and seventh grade teacher with my primary teaching responsibility being science. In 2001 while serving as an adult volunteer at Institute, a senior high summer camp sponsored by the Kansas East Conference of The United Methodist Church, I had what I came to understand as a “call to ministry.” The summer of 2002 I retired from teaching and begin working for First United Methodist in Lawrence. That fall I started seminary at Saint Paul School of Theology, which was at that time in KCMO. I graduated with a Master of Divinity in 2007 and was ordained an elder in The United Methodist Church in 2010. These past fifteen years have been for me one of transition. It is a blessing to use my gifts as I work to bring people closer to God through Jesus Christ. Doing so, we together transform lives and our world. If you are looking for a place with down to earth, “real” people, I suggest you check us out. Join us for worship several times. Perhaps, this is where God is leading you. I look forward to sharing the journey as we “Embrace God’s love, respond with love for all, grow our faith, and serve the needs of others.” That is our mission.