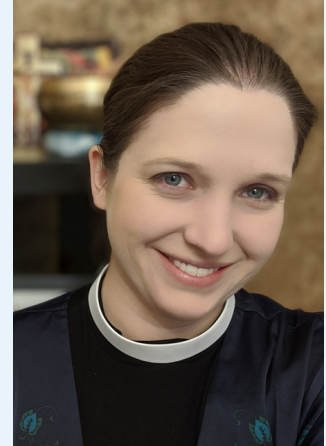


# FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

## HAPPY THURSDAY AFTERNOON!

As I awoke on Monday morning this week, I rose with joy, as it is now “officially official” that I can call myself the Pastor at St Thomas Lutheran Church, Grosse Ile! I am very excited as we "set sail" together to explore with you where God is calling us and how God will use us and the relationships we build to share the Good News of God’s incredible love. In the weeks ahead, I look forward to getting to know you all better, even as I also ask that you bear with me while I try to learn names and faces. I tend to be a visual learner, so using the name tags that we will have ready in the narthex for you will be a great help to me, and reminding me of your name each week will also be helpful! I appreciate your patience, as I will likely need to ask you to help remind me of your name for awhile as I get to know everyone.



In that same spirit of getting to know one another, I thought it might be beneficial for you to learn a little bit more about who I am and provide a little introduction to my family as we undertake this journey together. I know that a brief bio was sent out prior to my Sunday with you in July and we had a small opportunity to begin introductions during the reception to follow my call sermon, but I wanted to take a little time to share more personally about my story, and to give a brief introduction to my family.

I consider myself to be from Victor, a suburb of Rochester, New York. We moved to Victor from central Pennsylvania when I began sixth grade—it was there that I was confirmed and later graduated high school, and where my parents lived when I started college at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, NY. My parents moved to the Johnstown, Pennsylvania area while I was in my sophomore year at HWS, where they have continued to reside since.

During my years at HWS, I had the opportunity to spend a semester studying abroad in Bath, England. It was while I was there, studying with professors in my chosen field (I majored in Medieval and Renaissance History and double-minored in European Literature and Religious Studies), that I found myself drawn towards ministry after years of God tugging on my heart. Upon my return home I began having conversations with my pastor and bishop that affirmed my sense of call to ordained ministry and applied to the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. I graduated in 2011 and was ordained into Word and Sacrament ministry on June 18, 2011.

My first call was to Ebenezer Lutheran Church in Willimantic, Connecticut, where I served as the pastor from June 2011 until March 2015. It was during my first Bishop's Convocation (a continuing education event for rostered leaders in the New England Synod) in

October of 2011 where I met Joshua, who was serving as pastor of a congregation on the other side of Connecticut. We began dating soon after, and got engaged in September 2014. It was at that time that I entered into conversation with the synod office about a new call, that would be a more reasonable commute from where Joshua was serving as the pastor. This conversation led me to



serve as the transitional pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Portland, Connecticut in late March 2015. Zion would later vote in September 2016 to call me as their pastor. Joshua and I were married in early May 2015, at First Lutheran Church in Southington, Connecticut, where Joshua was the pastor, with Bishop Hazelwood of the New England Synod officiating.

We welcomed our son, in December 2016, and our family grew again when our daughter was born in August 2019. You will almost never hear us use their given names online (and therefore in any sermons that I preach or any writings posted online), as we decided to give them a little anonymity and online safety. So you will always hear me refer to our son as “Monkey” and our daughter as “Llama”. Monkey got his name because from the moment he could stand on his feet, he was off climbing on everything!

Llama was given her moniker by her big brother, who was 2.5 when she was born, and he was very into llamas at the time. Both Monkey and Llama are full of energy, curious, and determined to help out in any way they can. Llama is a little warier, at least at first, but it won't take her long to charm you! Monkey will be quick to try to make you laugh and show you all the "tricks" he can do! They love to be outdoors as much as possible, coloring, and trying out new experiments.

I came to the Southeast Michigan Synod by way of my call as co-pastor to St Luke's Lutheran Church in Temperance, where I served until my last Sunday with them on July 3 of this year. We have been living in Toledo, Ohio since 2019, and so we are preparing for our next steps to get fully settled here in the Downriver area. My husband's congregation, Faith Lutheran Church in Brownstown, voted to call him on the same Sunday that St Thomas held the call vote for me here, and so we have had the joy of celebrating the acceptance of new calls together! As I mentioned before, we are still in a bit of flux while we bring the chapter of our lives in Toledo to a close and get established in our new home and new schools for the kids in the weeks ahead. We continue to appreciate your prayers, especially for them, as they adjust and transition into this next chapter.

More personally, Joshua and I have long had a shared interest in home improvement projects. Over the years we have spent many hours working on renovation projects, both in our own homes, and improving the building that used to serve as the Lutheran campus ministry for Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Together, we have gained countless hours of experience in caulking, painting, refurbishing decks, stretching carpet, and repairing doors, among many other tasks. We are avid hikers and love to seek out new wooded trails to explore in our free time. Pre-kids, I became a runner and was on a team for Camp Calumet's Reach the Beach fundraiser for several years. It is a love I intend to get back to in the near future. Something else about me that won't take you long to learn—I am a bit of a "nerd", a title I wear with pride. I grew up watching Star Trek: The Next Generation, and quickly became a sci-fi fan. I also enjoy fantasy (both books and movies!) like The Lord of the Rings, The Chronicles of Narnia, The Sword of Truth series, and of course, Harry Potter.

As we begin this voyage together with worship this evening and on Sunday, of course there is much more about me and my family that you will come to learn, just as I look forward to learning more about you as individuals and as a congregation. One of the many gifts that we have to offer one another will be exploring the stories that have formed us throughout our lives, and how God is shaping and molding our stories to weave together in this new chapter. St Thomas, I am truly excited to see the ways in which God is and will continue to take our stories and unite them to spread God's love in our congregation, our community, and the world.

In Christ,  
Pastor Kari

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