

Greetings Members and Friends of Vernon Presbyterian Church!

I want to take this space to introduce myself to you as the new Stated Supply Pastor! My first day at church is Tuesday, November 28th. I'll spend the majority of the day learning my way around the building, meeting the office staff, CDC staff, saying "Hi!" to the kids and generally getting acquainted.

I'm planning to be in my office on Tuesday afternoons (1-4) and Thursday mornings (9-noon) for the first 6 weeks or so; then reevaluate how that goes. So, if you'd like to visit with me, that's when you'll find me on the premises for now; I'll also be available by appointment at other times if those hours don't work for you. If I'm not in the office, just ask the church office for my cell phone number. I intend to use Tuesday mornings and Thursday afternoons to visit members who are unable to come to church.

So, here's some info about me: I come to you by way of the United Church of Christ—my home denomination for the past ten years. I was ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) almost nineteen years ago...on the 35th anniversary of my confirmation! I'm learning the workings of the Presbyterian Church, and am impressed by the collaborative nature of how we "do" church together!

My last six years were spent in Specialized Ministry through a funeral home, providing Life Celebration services for people with no religious affiliation, or people who wanted a non-traditional style service. Over the course of those years, I served nearly 400 families. I'm now glad to be back in a congregation where there is more life to be experienced in worship, the Sacraments, weddings and other joyful (and mundane!) experiences together.

I live on the southside of Milwaukee (a scant mile north of General Mitchell Field), just an 18 minute drive to church. I share life with my partner-and-husband, Howie, who is also a retired pastor now serving people (literally!) at Noodles & Company (after always wanting to work in a restaurant!). We are parents of four adult children, three of whom are married and two of whom have children; all of whom live in the area. We share four grandchildren ranging in age from 23 years to 3 months (I have photos—just ASK!) We live with our old beagle, Lucy.

Howie and I like to travel, dine out, laugh, talk theology and dance. When I have free time I like to spend it with family and friends, knit and crochet, play with plants, and occasionally ride a bike.

I look forward to meeting you in person, hearing your stories and hopes for the future. It will take me some time to get to know everyone's names to put with faces, learn the culture of the congregation and be "up to speed." I ask your patience and forgiveness for any bumps along the way as we learn to "dance" together in this time and place to the glory of God. I'm honored to be your Pastor for the time I have with you and look forward to worshiping with you, envisioning with you Vernon Presbyterian Church's future and experiencing what God has in store for us on this journey together!

Blessings Abound,

Pastor Claire Beutler-Cruise