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Pastor Finds “Grace”

Rev. Rebecca Peters found an unexpected sense of belonging as the newest pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Tomahawk during her installation ceremony on July 23, 2008.

Originally from Stevens Point, Rebecca didn't picture herself living in a rural community. Nevertheless, “I fell in love with the people here,” she stated. “It's a lively and growing congregation.” She explained being pleasantly surprised at the various forms of ministry already thriving at Grace, as well as the wide mix of age groups and families.

Her road to ordainment was anything but quick. First feeling the call to serve at age fourteen, Rebecca she didn't see herself as the pastor type. “It seemed completely absurd,” she recalled. She instead chose a different path, earning a communications degree from Carroll University (formerly Carroll College).

However, after spending two years working in the world of corporate advertising, she began having second thoughts. “The advertising culture didn't reflect life I wanted to lead. It's cutthroat and competitive, and I just couldn't see myself doing that for the rest of my life,” she said.

She graduated from the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago in 2008. As part of her theological training Rebecca completed a one-year internship at Faith Lutheran Church in Arlington, VA. She then spent an extra year of residency in Clinical Pastoral Education at Georgetown Hospital in Washington, D.C.

Duties at Georgetown involved working closely with patients and families in crisis. She compares the experience to a regular medical residency with little sleep, constantly being on-call, and working 70-hour weeks. “It was very intense, but rewarding to care for the part of the body that medicine can't touch,” she stated.

Rebecca says her time as a CPE gave her the ability to develop relations with people at the very basic level. When asked about her visions for Grace, Peters was quick to acknowledge her new role. “I'm still discerning because I'm a new pair of eyes,” she said. “I'm looking for ways to enhance aspects of Grace, but not to change it.”

Her passion lies within social justice issues and how the church responds to people in communities. “God is bigger than a certain box. We're called to represent those who can't represent themselves, especially in the United States,” she said. Other interests include spending time with friends and family, reading, and riding motorcycles. She also finds renewal through traveling.

Pastor Rebecca is excited to get to know the community over the next few years and share duties of the church, including sermons, weddings, funerals, and Bible studies. “I see the congregation as my boss. People care about each other here.”