

Minister Catherine Crimi

Supply Pastor for St. Timothy Lutheran Church in Hendersonville, TN

Tell us a little about yourself and how you serve.

I was baptized as an infant in a Missouri Synod Lutheran Church in the Milwaukee, WI area, where I grew up, and served as president of our Walther League youth group, at which time I felt called to church leadership. During college, at time spent in Madison, WI, I was introduced to the Jesus Movement, and had my first introduction to women as ordained clergy. After moving to Tennessee as an adult, I joined a - what then was an LCA - mission congregation where I learned of all the possibilities of women serving in church leadership, I currently serve on a churchwide basis as a board member of the European Descent Lutheran Association for Racial Justice, after being part of the convening group which created this organization of the ELCA, which began conversations in 2005. I also continue to serve as a liaison to the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage (ALAMEH), and was a representative of EDLARJ at the summits of all the ethnic groups whose work together provided much of the framework for the new strategy for the ELCA. For the Southeastern Synod, I served as the Chairperson of the Multi-Cultural Commission beginning in 2004; then under restructuring the Chairperson of the Anti-Racism Task Force where we have led anti-racism workshops for synod staff, synod council, affiliated organizations like Lutheridge, and congregations and their communities. I now serve on the Advocacy Policy Council. Locally, I now serve as Supply Pastor for St. Timothy Lutheran Church in Hendersonville, TN, where, like all faith communities I have been a part of, I value the sacred spaces we share together trying to continually discern what it is to live out our calling both individually, and communally as followers of Jesus.

What is your favorite Bible verse and why?

My favorite Bible story is when Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well. My preference is always stories over verses, partly because as a child, when my maternal grandfather would visit (he was a LCMS pastor), he always loved to tell us stories about Jesus, which I always embraced. I also am challenged by verses which too often are used out of context. Why this story is important to me, during our New Testament class at Vanderbilt's Divinity School, our professor invited one of my classmates, who grew up in a community where women went to the well for water, to share with the class, what this story meant to her. She opened my eyes to much more extensive meaning than I had ever been exposed, and it also aligned with and strengthened my continually developing belief that God, and Jesus as his example to us, has a desire for all people (and creation) to flourish.

Where have you seen God recently?

I see God working amongst us through all the challenges of the pandemic, last fall's election, and the insurrection of the Capitol, which results in many people of faith taking new initiatives to expand their understanding of our society and the experiences our entire human family. I continue to be thankful for all the guidance the Holy Spirit provides, even when we are not aware the work that is being done. I also have experienced the love and compassion of the faith community of St. Timothy Lutheran Church as we have prepared for, and begun our journey together.

When/how have you been blessed by God's abundance?

Learning about God's abundance, and recognizing and embracing that gift, has been an interesting, as well as challenging journey for me. Growing up in a family, where my father, as an immigrant, worked two jobs until I was in high school to support his wife and six children, after giving up dreams of becoming a physician when enlisting in the Army during WWII, and my mother, who raised the six children, after being forced out of nursing school when she got married; we did not live with the presence and understanding of God's abundance. Additionally, the conservative faith community we were a part of, was more about limitations than abundance. It was actually as a single parent, raising three children while working and going to school, and surrounded by a faith community where at least some people embraced the abundance which God provides where I began this journey. It was then that I took what I felt were some bold and brave steps to embrace tithing, and began looking more outward at the experiences of others than being concerned about myself. Since then, I have been amazingly blessed. I abandoned a career in Accounting, earned both a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Computer Science which supported a 25-year career in Information Technology, and then earning a Master's of Divinity and completing the Candidacy process with the Southeastern Synod, as I embark on another career serving our God by continually exploring what God desires of us, and sharing the sacred spaces we, in the human family have in common. The relationships which I share with all who I encounter, and the love and support, from people I have worked with, especially those of other cultures, the faith and interfaith groups in Cleveland, OH during internship, family, friends, and individuals in faith communities I have been a part of, have helped me to grow, and blessed me more than I could have ever imagine. This is God's abundance which I receive, and hopefully will continue to look for ways to share that gift with all of creation. To God be all the glory!