

Ms. Beth Ford
Messiah Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN

In my vocation as the federal defender in East Tennessee, I walk with people who are dealing with the worst days of their lives. The clients of my office are facing decades in prison or sadly know the date that the state or the U.S. government will kill them. My staff and I are often the only caring people with whom they have any contact. My work has led me to adopt Micah 6:8 as my favorite verse. I want to do justice and to convince others to do justice. I have learned much more from my clients than they have ever received from me, and I see God in their faces and in the faces of those who have chosen to do this work with me.

Away from the office (which is currently in my piano room), I am passionate about the work of the YWCA (Eliminate Racism, Empower Women), mentoring and teaching at the University of Tennessee, the Beck Cultural Center, and, of course, Messiah Lutheran Church, Knoxville, TN where I have been a part of the family for more than 40 years.