

Greg Menssen Bio and Statement of Call

I have had quite a journey in my history of faith tradition. I was raised in a UCC Church in my hometown of Lodi Ohio, and moved to the Lutheran Church when I was in late high school. When I started at Otterbein College in 1986, I did not have car and the only churches within walking distance were both Methodist churches and so I attended there for 4 years. When I married two years after graduation, I became a member of the Roman Catholic church, attending and serving in many committee including school board president at St. Mary Catholic Church in Delaware, Ohio. I was divorced many years later, and so I went first to the Methodist Church that was close to where I was living, and then to First Congregational UCC on Broad St. Columbus. That is when I began dating my current wife, and I joined her at Old Stone Presbyterian Church where I found my home.

I have felt a tug toward ministry most of my life. I spent a great deal of my life passing this off to the fact that my father had wanted to be a pastor and had not been able to attend college due to financial reasons. This tug got stronger in college, but I decided instead to change my major to education, and I spent 35 years teaching math at Dublin City Schools. When I got divorced, one of the things that was able to reenter my life was a more spiritual connection to church. When I met my current wife Wendi, she was supportive and encouraging for me to seek the necessary education to answer this call. My pastor was encouraging as well. Then I got involved in Kairos Prison Ministry, and this experience amplified that call. But at this point I was very dependent on my teaching income to support my family of 8, and financial assistance is difficult if one is only part time in seminary. And so I put it off out of necessity, and resigned myself to the fact that I would not be able to stop teaching until I was 62. But God had a different plan, and I had a series of 7 orthopedic surgeries one of which caused permanent and significant nerve damage in my back and legs and forced me to take early, medically based retirement. This is when I was able to apply for a scholarship at MTSO, and began attending. I felt both nervous and set free all at once. My time in seminary has been tremendously affirming to my call, and I have found that the elements of ministry that I have had some apprehension about have become strengths in my development rather than hindrances. Serving a small church for my field education has been not only affirming to my call to preach and to teach, but foundational in my call to be a leader in calling the church to be the best that it can be for its community. I am so excited for seminary to be done, not because I don't want to write any more papers, but because I want to see what God has in store for me next; to see God's work play out in front of me as I engage others in God's love.