

Fiftieth Anniversary of Ordination

The Rev. Albert I Douglass



I was a row house kid from Holmesburg whose first memory of church was a Sunday school class at Good Shepherd Mayfair. Convinced that my butt was fat, my clothes were disheveled, and aware of the need to use my sleeve to wipe my nose, and this strange room below the church was anything but welcoming. They gave me a poster card with my name on it picturing Jesus welcoming the children. All those children were clearly identifiable as members of groups that my white culture taught me were inferior. Here they were Jesus' best friends. I felt I could belong. The ministry of Good Shepherd Mayfair introduced me to Jesus, to my wife - Carol McClay, and to doing ministry.

I served four congregations. The first two were formative. The people of St Luke's, Obelisk revealed a depth of faith that challenged my arrogant assumption that no one was proclaiming justification with the biblical integrity that I had learned in Seminary. Ten years in Little Zion, Telford I spent more time visiting members, welcomed the talents of the people into our congregational ministry, and shared more of my talents. This time of vigorous growth required significant pruning as I experienced my limitations.

Leaving Little Zion for Reformation in Media was a challenge. Within a year I was involved in a tragic car accident that cost the life of a young teenage congregational member during a ski trip. Sixteen years of pastoral experience; significant time spent studying interpersonal relationships; support from my family, congregation, and colleagues could not heal the lost experienced by the child's family nor loose me from weight of guilt and grief I hid to myself. The rest of my ministry at Reformation I tried to convince myself that my life had value by being the most effective person I could be. A close friend said to me; "for a pastor who preaches grace so well, you rarely live in it." I felt incapable of growing Reformation

When the younger of our two daughters was ready to leave for college, I sought another call. Upper Dublin wanted to build and were moving ahead even though they were seeking a pastor. I wanted to fill that building with people. Janet Waechter, chair of the Synod Evangelism Committee, was a key member of a highly functioning congregation. Upper Dublin was a Welcome Place. When the call committee passed me on to church council, I wrote a ten-page manifesto, utilizing the Congregational Consultation report that Herb Miller had conducted for them. Before they met with me, I spoke with my nephew, Doug Evans, about starting a contemporary band at Upper Dublin for one of their services. I began my ministry on April 1, 1995. We called our building campaign, "Build to Witness." I had interns, then assistants, and

finally Dyan Lawlor joined me as co-pastor. I retired after a second building campaign started at the beginning of the recession of 2008. In the worst financial times, we did the best thing, “Live to Witness” and completed that campaign with significant additions to our campus and less debt than when we started. Most importantly we grew in worship attendance and members.

Everything I learned as a Pastor seemed to come together at Upper Dublin. Carol was able to share more of her talents and developed a visitation program for grieving members, a woman’s retreat, and a robust couple’s relationship ministry.

My story is of growing competence along with greater willingness to give all my time, talent, and treasure to my ministry. Obviously, this is my weakness and greatest vulnerability to failure. I have not learned how to live in the grace I have always experienced. For me, the impossibility of that last sentence sums up my journey. God carried me.

My retirement is an experience of gratitude. I still give it my all, still fail, still told I am my own worst enemy, and still want to sing, laugh, and share Jesus’ love.

Fiftieth Anniversary of Ordination The Rev. David A Genszler

Early Childhood through High School

Upper Montgomery School District
Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

College Years:

School of Graphic Arts and Photography
Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY

College of Liberal Arts
Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, PA

Graduate School
The Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia

Doctoral Studies
University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN

Professional

Clergy – Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – **50 years**
Four congregations, in Ohio and Pennsylvania
Assistant to the Bishop, Interim Ministries, Ohio and Pennsylvania
Assistant to the Bishop, Dean of Clergy, Cleveland East, Ohio, Parishes
Chair of the Bishop's Committee Ecumenical Studies, Ohio
Teaching in Scripture and Early Church History
Cleveland (Ohio) Lutheran High Schools
College of Notre Dame, Cleveland



Family

Barbara J. Griesbacher (deceased, 2005)
Andrew D. – Clergy
Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries, Cleveland, OH
Mark F. – Clergy
Episcopal Parish Ministry, Brooklyn, NY
John W. – Clergy
Lutheran Parish Ministry, Toledo, OH
Six Grandchildren

In Retirement:

Classical Music
Kimmel Center, The Curtis Institute, Severance Hall, Carnegie Hall
Classical Jazz
The Agora, Cleveland
Christian McBride on the Air, Philadelphia
Theater and Cultural
Science and Art Club of Germantown
Mt. Airy Sedgwick Theater
Allens Lane Art and Theater Center
Human Justice and Environment Concerns
Philadelphia Northwest Interfaith Hospitality Network
Philadelphia, PA – Interfaith Power and Light
Philadelphia Energy Solutions (SUNOCO Refinery Remediation)
Model Rail Road LIONEL Trains

Fiftieth Anniversary of Ordination The Rev. David Mueller



David E. Mueller was born in a small town outside Pittsburgh in 1944, raised and educated there. I graduated from Valparaiso University with a major in Political Science. While not being told, I went to a Lutheran University to meet a Lutheran mate. Over 80% of the students in the 60s were from various Lutheran backgrounds, but I met a conservative Baptist. Our main and modal conflicts during a three-year engagement were over religious differences. My Confirmation classes had been rigorous, that I was able to articulate to Estrellita and her family why I was already “saved.” Actual attacks on my faith led me to consider ministry. My Great Grandfather was the first graduate of Concordia Seminary and from his progeny had

come literally scores of Missouri Synod pastors. We married in 1996. I was accepted at Concordia, Springfield in 1967, graduating in 1971. I was later awarded a Th.M. from Princeton Seminary. Christ’s faith in me has never wavered, while the reverse obviously has not been so true.

I served my Vicarage as Lutheran Campus Pastor at Kent State University the year of the shootings. Upon graduation, I was called to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (LCMS) near Toledo, Ohio. The Missouri Synod could never educate relationships out of me. While at POP, I was Chair of the local Ministerium, on the Board of Directors of Lutheran Social Services of NW Ohio, and was Vice-Chair of the Greater Toledo Inter-Lutheran Clergy Fellowship.

I did a basic quarter of CPE at the Medical College of Ohio Hospital in Toledo, applied for and was accepted for a CPE Residency at the University of Virginia Medical Center in Charlottesville. Upon completion, I was called to Concordia, Wilmington, Delaware as Director of CONTACT Delaware, a 24 hour crisis intervention hotline founded by Concordia. Two years later I was called as Pastor. I retired from Concordia after just under 30 years.

I was a trained Mediator in the LCMS and served on boards of various secular and religious organizations in Wilmington, including decades of experience in Jewish-Christian Relationships. I have taught “Interfaith Relationships” at the University of Delaware Osher Academy four times jointly with a Reform Rabbi and an Ursuline Nun, the three of us known as the Wilmington “God Squad.” The course has been the most popular there ever.

I took the training for Interim Ministry several years prior to my retirement. Bill Shafer’s daughter was a member of Concordia and Bill invited me to attend Interim meetings at SEPA. Upon “reirement,” I served formal interims at Centennial, Kimberton twice, Good Shepherd, Coatesville, Living God, Honeybrook, Community of Love, Oxford and several in Delaware. I WAS WARMLY RECEIVED IN THE ELCA IN 2008.

The Muellers have three married children (two daughters and a son), five Grandchildren and live in Landenberg. I have flunked retirement several times and am currently at St. Mark's, Wilmington. My membership and affection remains in the Synod which received me, SEPA.