

A WORD FROM REV. HINMAN

It was a dark and stormy night... Okay, maybe not. Truth is, I wasn't really sure what the best way was to start my very first column for The Messenger. It seemed a bit clichéd to start out with "my name is Katy Hinman, and I'm your new pastor!" On the other hand, this is an introduction and that's how we generally start introductions. But maybe I'm overthinking it. Why don't we jump right in?

I grew up in Decatur, went to high school at Druid Hills, and then went off to college in the frozen north – Carleton College, in Northfield Minnesota. I majored in biology and after college went to the State University of New York at Stony Brook on Long Island where I pursued a PhD in Ecology and Evolution. My research was on nectar-feeding bats, and I spent my summers in southeastern Arizona studying two species of bats and the agave plants that they pollinate. While finishing my dissertation, I moved out to Arizona and worked as the Bat Biologist for the Arizona Game and Fish Department. I received my PhD in 2003 and immediately turned around and went *back* to graduate school, this time in the Master of Divinity program at Candler School of Theology at Emory University.

While at Candler, I got a job as the Executive Director of Georgia Interfaith Power & Light, a non-profit organization that works with faith communities on environmental issues. I continued working with GIPL after graduation, as I went through the beginnings of the ordination process, and then in 2010, I received my first appointment, as associate pastor at Decatur First UMC. It was there that, among other things, I met my husband, Jonathan Brown (who is now the pastor at Hapeville UMC).

As you may gather, I did not come to ministry by a direct route. I started going to church (Oak Grove UMC) in seventh grade when I was roped into the youth group by some friends of mine. I stayed active in the church through high school, but (like many folks) didn't stay connected through college. However, when I went off to graduate school, I got involved in a graduate student Bible study and became active at North Shore UMC. The folks at North Shore recruited me into lay speaker training, serving on the worship committee, and being on church council. They were the first ones to plant the "seminary bug" in my ear.

When I moved off to Arizona, Sunrise UMC picked up the call, and by the time I had turned in my final dissertation, I was enrolled at Candler. Throughout my time at Candler, I still wasn't sure where God's call was leading me – into pulpit ministry, academia, extension ministry – but gradually began to discern that ordination was part of my call. I was so blessed by the opportunity to serve at Decatur First UMC and to recognize the wonderful ways that God could work in and through me in the local church.

I am living proof that the Lord works in mysterious ways, but it has also given me great appreciation for the fact that we can come at ministry from many different directions. God gives us all opportunities to use our gifts, our interests, our uniqueness in varied ways that can work together to spread God's love in the world.

I am so excited to be here at College Park First UMC! I cannot wait to get to know all of you, this church, and this community. I am eager to see what God has in store for us together!

Many blessings,

Katy

PS I would love the chance to get to know you! I have set up a calendar at <http://tinyurl.com/meetkaty> where you can sign up for a time for us to get together. If you'd prefer, you can email me (katy@cpfirstumc.org) or call the church office to set up a time.

PPS Jonathan and I will be moving into the College Park parsonage in a few weeks, along with our cats (Trilby, Ollie, and Max) and dogs (Kapka and Begonia). We look forward to being part of the neighborhood!