

## A Letter from The Rev. Deacon Rachel Iversen

Hello Good People of Christ Church!

I am The Rev. Deacon Rachel Iversen and will be with you as your deacon for at least the next six months. I am fortunate to already know some of you from my recent seminary internship with the Central Gulf Coast CDF Freedom School and my tenure as your Interim Youth Director during your national search. I am looking forward to getting to know each one of you better, but first I wanted to let you know a little bit about me.

My husband Craig and I have been married for twenty-eight years. We have three children: Mary Catherine (23), Philip (21), and Chris (16). Our daughter lives and works in Missoula, Montana in the Bitterroot Forest. Our son, Philip is a senior at UWF majoring in Marine Science. Our son, Chris is a junior at Washington High School. Craig works for the Florida Forest Service and is stationed at Blackwater.

I am a “cradle Episcopalian,” Army brat born in Oklahoma and raised in Florida. I attended Ferry Pass Middle and Woodham High. My dad worked as a computer programmer at Cape Canaveral while earning his masters in accounting and my mom was a “Stay-at-Home” mom, Girl Scout Leader and later after earning her degree became a Nursing Home Administrator. My parents' family were Protestants in the Methodist and Baptist denominations. Before my dad was deployed to Korea, they were married in the Episcopal Church in Birmingham.

Most recently I attended Holy Cross and was very active there, serving at the altar as a lay Eucharist minister and visitor, attending and leading Sunday school classes, serving on the Youth Advisory Council, attending Education for Ministry (EfM) classes and singing in the CrossWalk Contemporary Service Band.

Professionally, I worked as a park ranger in Utah, Wyoming and Florida. I was a steward to the earth. Then, in my thirties, my focus changed and I became a steward to one of our most valuable resources, children and youth. I was employed by Holy Cross as their youth director and later parish administrator. Currently, I am employed by the Gulf Breeze School of Music as their Office Manager.

Academically, I earned a bachelor's of Education degree from the University of Memphis and a master of Science degree from the University of Utah. My journey to the diaconate was a call that started many years ago and came to fruition when I signed up for the four-year EfM program from the School of Theology at the university of the South, led by Fr. Walt Kindergan. This program started me on my path of discerning my call to ministry.

Fr. Glenn Rohrer called together a Holy Cross discernment committee and with their blessing, I moved forward in a call to ordained ministry. About four years ago, our bishop, The Rt. Rev. Russell Kendrick, introduced a new concept in developing much-needed clergy in the diocese: a local school for ministry. I was fortunate to be one of those chosen to attend the school. After three years of study, I graduated earlier this summer and on June 28 was ordained a deacon.

I look forward to seeking ways to serve God and his people as a deacon in his Church, in the world and, in particular, at Christ Church.