



## The Illinois Conference Welcomes The Reverend Molly Carlson as our New Conference Minister!

A graduate of The College of Wooster with a BA in mathematics and Pacific School of Religion with a Masters of Divinity, Rev. Carlson brings a wide range of experience to the position of Conference Minister. She has been ordained within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for 19 years and has held Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing with the United Church of Christ for the last 8. Molly's service in a variety of contexts, including local, regional, and national settings of the church, has taken her to Indiana, California, South Dakota, Oregon, and Tennessee. She has served as an interim minister, church planter, solo pastor, head of staff, and church consultant.

Currently, Rev. Carlson is serving as Intentional Interim Minister at Eastwood Christian Church in Nashville, TN, after completing her term as Designated Term Conference Minister for the Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ. Molly's commitment to lifelong learning is evidenced by her recent training as a professional coach, as well as with The Art of Hosting. She also completed all the requirements toward her DMin at Lexington Theological Seminary, including a final project titled "Creating Church in a Postmodern Context."

The following statement from Rev. Carlson's ministerial profile speaks to the passion she brings to her work:

*I have a passion for middle-judicatory ministry. It is the big picture and the details. It is leadership and community building. It is networking and recruiting. It is conflict management and corporate celebration. It is administration and proclamation. It is fundraising and event planning. It is being a pastor to pastors – and their families. It is supporting congregations in transition. It is equipping congregations to do more together than any can do alone. It is building a community of faith that celebrates, grieves, supports encourages, and learns from one another. [...] I believe there is an urgent need for the progressive church and the good news of Jesus Christ for this time and place – in every church, in every community, in each and every one of our neighbors.*

Molly grew up as a preacher's kid in northwest Indiana. She stayed in the Great Lakes Region for college, followed by a management role with Ameritech (now, again, AT&T). She and Michael have been married for 23 years and are proud parents to teenagers, Sierra and Adam. They have three dogs, a whole lot of books, and are looking forward to making a home once again near the Great Lakes.

Rev. Carlson was recommended to the Illinois Conference Personnel Committee and then the Conference Council by the Conference Minister Search Committee after a nationwide search that included a pool of several exceptional candidates. Molly's election by the delegates of the Illinois Conference at the Annual Meeting (held virtually via YouTube, Zoom, and SurveyMonkey), was culminated today, Saturday, June 27<sup>th</sup>, with a 99% affirmative vote. We are excited that Molly will be able to start her ministry in the Illinois Conference on August 1<sup>st</sup>, and we look forward to partnering with her as we move forward together as the Illinois Conference!