



MID Spotlight

**Nicole Leigh Shaw
Northeast Association**

It's fine. Call me Nikki, call me Nicole. I answer to both. Sometimes I answer to Nicole Leigh Shaw because there are a lot of "Nicole Shaws" out there and at one time in my writing career it was important to differentiate.

You can sometimes call me "pastor." I get that a lot as a member and staff person (the Christian Education Director) at Peace UCC in Fort Wayne, IN. I'm the de facto youth and children's pastor there, and after a few sermons and a lot of youth groups, as well as the support of my senior pastor, the "Pastor" moniker attaches.

Around the IKC I am decidedly "Nikki can you get on Facebook and . . ." and I can, and do! For this conference and for the Ohio conference, I'm the communications director, which means I write, I create social media posts, and I try hard to pay attention to all of the stories I hear, and to tell them faithfully and purposefully to our wider conference members. We know each other through our stories; we know Christ through our stories, not only as contemporary witnesses, but through the Biblical witness. And so this communications work is vocational for me.

You can also call me graduated. I finished my Masters of Divinity from Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, IN, this spring. There were academic honors that I worked hard for, and some I'm humbled to have received. But mostly, after three full-time years of study, though I'm happy to have run the course, I know I'll be a bit wistful for the learning.

And, finally, you can call me reluctant. I have been made known to our IKC community when I was introduced as the communications director and part of the annual gathering planning team. I resisted the request to introduce myself again in the MID spotlight. But I realize that I wanted to say to you all that I am excited to be with you, to be on the brink, one hopes, of ordination in the UCC, not only as a member of the denomination, but as a particular member of the IKC, the conference in which I first heard my call to ministry, and in which I hope to serve both in churches preaching and teaching, and in the wider structures telling our stories and meeting our larger community. And that has been worth all this self-talk. Thanks for letting me share my joy with you.