

## **The Rev. William C. Ridenhour**

Pastor Bill Ridenhour is a native of Greensboro, NC. At age three, his parents moved the family to Gettysburg, Pa, where he was reared on Seminary Ridge. Seminary Ridge was the line for the Army of Northern Virginia on July 3, 1863, the final day of the Battle of Gettysburg. The battlefield and its monuments were a playground throughout his formative years. He is a product of Gettysburg's public school system and was a fair to middling athlete. Good enough to start on a good soccer team. Barely good enough to ride the pine on a good basketball team.

He is fully and wholly a child of the 80s. There is a lot of good in that (and a lot of bad, too). John Hughes movies. MTV when MTV was merely a radio with pictures and not full of reality nonsense. Polo shirt collars flipped up. The switch from three channels and PBS to cable. Thursday night's lineup on NBC. 80s on 8 is always the first station to kick in when he starts the car.

Upon high school graduation, Bill left for Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, Pa. There he and his classmates received a better education than they deserved from a faculty who cared about them more than they deserved. He earned a degree in history (the battlefield must have done something) under his mentor whose research was focused on the history of 19th and 20th century American technology.

Bill is a product of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries. Through high school and college summers he worked at Camp Nawakwa in Arendtsville, Pa. From kitchen staff, lifeguard, counselor and transportation director (the best camp job ever), he spent summers in the woods. These summers at Nawakwa and the people with whom he built relationships were instrumental to his life's calling.

Following Elizabethtown, he spent one required year at The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia before completing his degree at Duke University in The Divinity School. He served his internship at Epiphany Lutheran Church in Richmond, Va.

Following internship, he moved to Wheeling, West Virginia. He accepted the call to First English Lutheran Church, where he remains. For 26 years, he has served a small, downtown parish in the heart of Appalachia. Appalachia brings a myriad of cultural challenges that make doing church exciting and exasperating. He has stayed at First English all this time because his children live in Wheeling and no potential new call has captured his attention until now.

He is a staunch supporter of both NC State and Duke. When they are good, he pays great attention to the Boston Red Sox. Now that it appears the Washington Football Team may get a new owner, he just might start paying attention to his favorite childhood football team.

An avid reader, mostly history but some fiction, he is currently working through Meacham's new biography of Lincoln with Jonathan Eig's brand-new biography of MLK next on the list. He is also working through a friends' book that serves as an introduction to reading the whole of scripture that could possibly serve as the foundation for an education offering.

Bill has two daughters. Eve, 21, is a rising Senior at the University of Richmond. Grace, turning 18 in early June, will matriculate at Bucknell University this August. He also has family roots in Concord. His mother and father were born and reared in Concord. They grew up in homes a few blocks from St. James.