

Call to Ministry

We have been on this path as a couple for many years. JJ knew since his confirmation class in Danube UMC that God has been inviting him into ministry, but it wasn't until 2005 that JJ said yes to God's invitation and began the process of becoming a candidate for ministry in the MN Conference. During his process, JJ felt called to pursue a seminary education and in 2011, we relocated our family to Wilmore, Kentucky. Seminary was a faith- growing experience for our entire family. After graduating in 2015, JJ was appointed to the UMC in Thief River Falls.

Stefanie has always considered ministry to be part of the entire family's journey, but it wasn't until after we returned from Kentucky that she began discerning God's invitation to her to begin her own process towards becoming a certified candidate for ministry.

What Breaks your heart?

Without the hope of Christ, it would be easy to become overwhelmed by the pain and suffering in the world today. Every day comes with stories of a new tragedy and greater sorrows. Our hearts break over the knowledge that there are children in our communities who do not have parents who can love them or care for them. We grieve for those who go hungry each night, or those who don't have a safe place to rest their head at night. We hurt for those who do not know the life-giving presence of Christ in their life.

Describe your Passion for the church:

We love the church and it pains us to see churches closing, losing people, and not bringing the Gospel message outside of the church's walls. Our passion is to grow new believers, disciple those in the churches and equip the laity to fulfill the great commission.

What is your view of scripture?

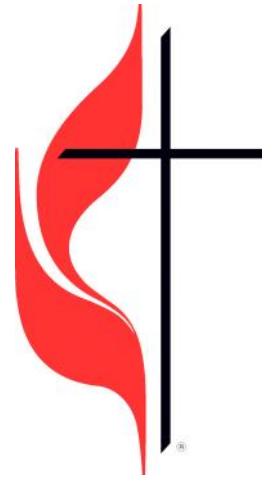
We share a high view of scripture. The core of our faith is in the Word of God. It is alive and speaks to us in different situations. It all points to Jesus. It is sacred and is a guide for life and faith.

What would you say is the Hope for the Church?

We place our hope in Jesus, because we are assured through scripture that He is triumphant over the evils of this world. We hope for a revival and a renewal of the church, for God to pour out the Holy Spirit and awaken all to the redemptive power, grace and mercy of Christ.

Minnesota Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church

Bruce R. Ough, Bishop



*If you pour yourself out for the hungry
and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,
then shall your light rise in the darkness
and your gloom be as the noonday.*

Isaiah 58:10



JJ & Stefanie Morgan

About JJ & Stephanie

Family

We have been married since 2002 and have 3 beautiful children: Zoey (11), Zander (9), and Sophia (5). We also have a 2 year old lab mix named Indy.



Education - JJ

- Master of Divinity - Asbury Theological Seminary (Wilmore, KY)
- Bachelor of Science - Urban Studies/Ethnic Studies - MSU, Mankato
- Associate of Applied Science - Business - Ridgewater College (Willmar, MN)

Education - Stefanie

- Associate of Applied Science - Massage Therapy - Rasmussen College (Mankato, MN)

Appointment History

JJ is currently serving at the United Methodist Church in Thief River Falls, MN. It is his first appointment after graduating from seminary and has been serving there since 2015.

What do you enjoy doing?

We both enjoy reading, watching movies and playing games with our children. We are a family that loves to camp and travel. Being able to show our children the world around them brings us joy. JJ enjoys volunteering his time helping and sharing his gifts. Stefanie enjoys being in nature, going for hikes or running (albeit slowly). She also enjoys writing.

Leadership Style

JJ's style of leadership follows the disciple's examples of servant leaders. He desires to equip others and provide encouragement so that all of God's people can serve. JJ sees himself as a "big picture" thinker. Stefanie compliments JJ's leadership by being someone who focuses on the details and implementation of plans. Stefanie, too, wants to equip and resource the members of the church to be the church to the outside world.

Other Involvement

JJ has been a member of our local ministerial association since moving to TRF, and has been serving as the vice-president of the organization for 1 ½ years. He has also joined with others in creating and facilitating a monthly ecumenical worship service to try to reach those already not served in a church. He has created and led worship services at local nursing homes. He also has created devotionals that are aired on the local radio station. He has served on teams for Walk to Emmaus, including recently serving as an assistant spiritual director.

As a volunteer, Stefanie has created a social media strategy for the TRF church, creating a public Facebook page, updating the church's website by making it more user friendly and adding more content, and providing ways to tithe online. She also helped start a MOPS group in Thief River and has been on the leadership team since its inception. In the past, she, too, has served on teams for Walk to Emmaus.

Leadership Gifts for Ministry

JJ's first gift is his willingness to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit for direction. He is also a self-starter, with a servant heart. He is detail-orientated, sees opportunities where others see roadblocks, embraces change and creativity. He is willing to learn in all situations and is energetic. He is an adaptive, resourceful team-builder with a deep faith in God. Stefanie is gifted with a passion for the Gospel message of love and redemption. She has gifts of administration and organization and is detail focused, but Kingdom minded. She also is gifted with a deep compassion and empathy for those around her, and wants to create environments to connect others to the deep love of God.

What is your favorite food?

JJ's favorite is Chinese....just bring him to a buffet and he is a happy man! Stefanie (and all the kids) would say pizza, though her palate includes more than just pepperoni. We love trying new things and experiment when we go to different places.

Describe your theological perspective

We are Wesleyan in that we believe in authority of scripture and affirm the truths of the Apostle's Creed and Nicene Creed. We believe in the Triune nature of God and we put our hope and faith in the grace and mercy of the Lord, believing in the life, death and bodily resurrection of Jesus.