



Hello. I'm going to introduce myself to you in writing, but I have an unusual background, so sometimes it's easier to discuss it in person. I hope we will have many opportunities to learn about each other as I settle into this new position at Urban Grace. Here's a little about me:

I'm Scottish. I was a student minister there, and I even officiated my cousin's wedding as a minister of the Church of Scotland--for one day. When I was about five, I announced that I was going to be a missionary to Malawi. No one seemed very surprised, but they would say, "We'll see." I stuck with that plan for 26 years. In between, I announced I was going to be a fashion designer, an astronaut, a teacher, and a photographer.

At 16, I lost the ability to walk for parts of two years. A South African surgeon in Texas and God enabled me to walk. It's an ongoing process, but it helped me to be very aware of the challenges of those who are differently abled.

It also meant I had to shift my plan from being a teaching missionary to being a bilingual art teacher (to my parents' horror) for a while. While in college, I switched my major to photography and cinema, and at their insistence, changed my minor from Spanish to business administration. I ended up working at a production company in Houston. The production company was very successful, but I lost the ability to walk again, and my dad was transferred to Chicago. Since I was recovering, I moved with them.

Once I was on my feet again, friends from church encouraged me to get involved in community theater as a director and producer. (It's starting to look like I can't stick with one thing, but the common thread is that I love working with people.) The same local congregation sent me off to the mountains above Los Alamos with about 20 teens, mostly boys, just before I left for seminary in Texas. We spent a week leading vacation Bible school, and I loved it.

My favorite part of seminary (after meeting my future husband) were the Greek and Hebrew classes. God gave me a gift for foreign languages, and I ended up teaching my classmates Hebrew. Then

one of the professors hired me to translate the Psalms. I did that for years, but it meant giving up my job bidding on government contracts with my dad. It seemed odd to be studying to be a minister while also supplying parts for Trident submarines!

I earned my M.Div. from Austin Seminary in 1997. Just after that, I was called by the PCUSA to serve in Malawi. My dream had come true: I was going to be a teaching missionary! But my denomination had a big fight, and congregations withheld their funding. To make up for the loss of funds, the PCUSA cut the funding to train missionaries and my position was no longer available. It was devastating. Honestly though, I figured God had a plan to make it right, but I would have liked a little heads up.

Meanwhile, one of my Korean classmates found out I had not gone to Africa. He hooked me up with a Korean congregation in central Houston. Their Korean teens spoke Spanish as a first language! I was their Youth Evangelist until I was called by a congregation in Philadelphia. I soon became the only pastor of the 450-member congregation, right out of seminary. Once the second head minister arrived, I switched to focusing on the youth. I was there for three years until I married Tom.

Once we married and I moved back to Texas, I focused on our family and moving around with the military. We had John on our second anniversary, then Hannah 16 months later and I would still preach occasionally. In Ohio, I served as Minister of Youth and Families for a school year. In 2008, we moved to help rebuild Tom's hometown, New Orleans, after Hurricane Katrina. The presbytery immediately asked me to moderate their Commission on Separation and Property Issues. It was a lot of messy legal work but I did that for many years. Tom was now back to being a pastor, so I volunteered a lot at the congregation he served and even took his job a few times while he was deployed.

Last year we took what we thought was a trip of a lifetime by train across the US. When we arrived in Washington, we knew we had found our retirement spot. When Tom returned from Antarctica (I'm not the only unusual one) last fall, we started our move to Sumner. It has been a wild ride, with lots of twists and turns, but I find straight stretches of road boring, so it has worked out so far. I'm looking forward to sharing more of the ride with you here at Urban Grace.