

St. Paul United Methodist Church
201 Veterans Pkwy, Willingboro, NJ 08046



Introducing...

As you may have heard, St. Paul has a new pastor, Rev. Alicia Julia-Stanley. She comes to us from the Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference (EPA). She retired from the local church setting in June, only to be called to our church. Pastor will begin on Sunday, July 20th. Please plan to attend worship at 10:30 am and greet her and her husband, Joe. Read below for more information about our new pastor.

Pastor Alicia says...

What Church looks like for me:

- Help persons - of all ages and seasons of life - understand that God loves them more than they can even begin to imagine, and that all he wants is for us to be in a relationship with him, beyond being religious- we need to remember that we might be the only Bible that most people will ever read- our actions have to speak louder than words ever will... the relationship that God desires with us is life-giving and transformational.
- As you will read on my Gift Inventory below, I believe that the Lord called me to be a *bridge-builder*. We were all created to live in a relationship with our Creator, who models this community in relationship with the Son and the Holy Spirit. Our relationship with the Lord is not a straight line: it invites and challenges us to go deeper, and to want more: until we are called Home. The Lord challenged me to walk alongside you as you discover, recover or uncover the gifts that he has given to each one of us to "*build each other up*" - and not to tear each other up - or down: through building community, discipleship and study.
- One of the tasks of ministry that gives joy to my soul is not just to tell God's Story, but to help you find yourselves in God's Story, for we are part of His Story. We are God's Masterpieces! When others just see the *impossible*, God sees what is *Possible* - even when we can't see it at all! We are all works in progress; some of us are more work than progress, and some of us are quite a piece of work, but God sees the *Possibility*- when we can't see it at all- through the eyes of Hope: when others see a lump of coal, He sees the diamond within (God works with us until we only let His light shine through us...) - God has Kingdom-vision...
- There is *power in community*! The skills that I have learned and developed through my studies and in ministry have opened my eyes to the many dimensions of ministry in any community - after all, we are all called to be *Kingdom Builders*. When we work together, we are building God's Kin-dom, as we build each other up, rather than tearing and destroying each other.

About our Family:

We are blessed with three (3) amazing children. Chelsea, lives in Kansas with her husband and our grandson, Gabriel, who will be 11 in November. Our youngest, Kerry, lives in Bensalem with our son-in-love, Scott, who has waged a war against a brain tumor that has spanned over 17 years. Last year, we all witnessed drastic changes in his health as the tumor seems to have the last word, but we all know that not even death can separate us from God's love in Jesus. His 37th birthday is next week. We pray for a miracle, knowing that God will give us one: we just don't know which one - or when.

Last, but not least, there's Joseph, our smart, kind-hearted, differently-abled 36 yrs old son, who wrestles every day with the challenges of living within the Autism Spectrum. He lives independently but with lots of support services in Reading, PA.

This is how Joe and I understand our calling to ministry: we go where we are sent, trusting God's Plan is always better - not just *better*, but the **Best!** We obey, God takes care of all the details - no doubt about it. UM Pastors are missionaries: we go and get to know the land and those who live in it. We bless them and equip them to transform their lives - and communities - for a season. Years of experience have reinforced what we learned long time ago: *the Church is God's expression to a particular community for a season set by God: God chooses that expression, not us.* This is where we have failed: we keep telling God how he should be known in the community, rather than lean into God's plan.

Joe is a much better cook and baker than I'll ever be (but he went to tech school for that). His heart is for missions (as in work with his hands), and you'll find out why the churches we have served keep telling me that he stays and I get visitation rights...but seriously, his heart belongs to the Lord, and he has an amazing skill set of gifts and graces he's never afraid to let God work through him. But I will never, ever, volunteer him to do anything. You need to ask him first. If I volunteer Joe, it's never pretty. He will volunteer me later on for something he knows I won't do otherwise. Our rule: do not volunteer without asking first. It keep us sane.

Last but not least, I have this gift that makes me carry an Epinephrine injector because of life-threatening allergies: some medications, all nuts, shellfish, mushrooms, most cheeses (can only eat ricotta and mozzarella), insect stings (bees, etc.), and cats (I just need fair warning with the cats, so I can shore up defenses)...it's not that I'm a picky eater. I prefer to stay away from ambulances and ERs, please help me stay healthy- and alive?

Looking forward to walking alongside all of you for this season!

Pastor Alicia & Joe

About me...

Born in Puerto Rico. Came to live in US in 1982. Entered EBTS (now Palmer Theological School) in January 1983 where I obtained my MDiv in May 1986.

Passionate, committed, motivated, skilled, and spirit-filled believer of Jesus Christ who pursues an ongoing relationship with God; several decades of experience in diverse church ministry settings - always following God's lead. Fierce advocate for justice and equity for the last, the least, the lost, the lonely and those left behind.

Skills/Gift Inventory

- Called to be a '*bridge builder*': between persons, in communities, in mission work, in word and deed, between persons and God.
- Not afraid to speak Truth to power- after all, it's not a 'me thing', don't mess with the One who sends us to speak Truth.
- Help others to navigate and negotiate the many layers of difficult conversations, using conflict resolutions skills to help all to listen to understand, not to win.
- An engaging teacher and facilitator, Been told that I am a gifted preacher (I'm just the messenger, the Message speaks by itself)
- Interpret budget and resource allocation to leaders in various settings.
- Knowledgeable in policies development and strategic planning.
- Skilled in community outreach in rural and urban settings.
- Bilingual: Spanish and English as a second language: Proficient translator/interpreter in written and oral communication
- Engaged in Community Organizing and Advocacy
- Developed and facilitated Advance Course for the North District Lay Academy: *Connecting with our Communities*, using the demographic data from Mission Insite and bringing it home with Scriptures.
- Active in EPA Healing the Wounds Core Team
- CRCC (Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural Ministries) Trainer
- Conference Monitoring Team
- Served as Co-Chair of the EPA Latino Commission and CORR
- Co-Chair EPA Economic Justice Council
- Served on the EPA Urban Ministries Committee
- Honored to serve as Delegate to the NEJ Conference (2024-2028)
- Not-so-technologically challenged, yet not an expert
- Life-long learner. The Lord isn't done with any of us yet!