

I am a native of Geneva, Ohio [on the southeast shore of Lake Erie] the fourth of five children. My family moved to Largo, Florida in 1966 and I completed high school there in 1977. I began college at Birmingham-Southern College [in Alabama] before transferring to Texas Christian University (TCU), in Fort Worth, Texas, where I received my bachelor's degree in 1982. Following my time at TCU, I served in the U.S. Army as an officer, earning a commission through the Reserved Officers Training Corps (ROTC) program. My first assignment was at the Army Materiel Command in Alexandria, Virginia and then as a company commander at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. While in the Army, I completed airborne training.

After leaving active duty I served in the Army Reserve for three years in training and chemical decontamination units. Following my years in the Army, I first taught at the Brookland Plantation Home for Boys in Orangeburg, South Carolina before attending Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina, where I received a Master's Degree in Education in 1988. I taught for two years in South Carolina and then moved to the Washington, D.C., area, where I worked in a bank for three years. In 1992, I answered the call to ministry, and in 1997, received a Master of Divinity degree from Wesley Theological Seminary in D.C. In 1996, I was ordained as a minister in the Nebraska Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, enjoying two parish assignments in the northeastern part of the state.

In 1999, I was endorsed by the United Methodist Church to serve in the U.S. Navy as a chaplain. My Navy assignments included Marine Aircraft Group 12 (Iwakuni, Japan), the Naval Hospital - Camp Lejeune (North Carolina), and Joint Maritime Facility – St. Mawgan (a British-American command) in Newquay, Cornwall, United Kingdom. While in the United Kingdom, I was active in the Cornwall District of the (English) Methodist Church, preaching on several circuit plans and at sites associated with the Wesleys.

While serving in the Navy I earned a Doctor of Ministry degree at the Theological School of Drew University. My thesis, "*Out of Many, One: The Formation of a Community of Faith in the Sea Services,*" focused on the challenges of creating a community of faith in a pluralistic environment. Since leaving the Navy in 2007, I have served United Methodist churches in Nebraska, Texas, Montana, and Colorado.

I love to learn and since leaving the Navy have completed a year-long residency in the CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) program at Audie L. Murphy VA Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas and The Twoyear Academy for Spiritual Formation (through the Upper Room). During my time in Montana I completed Track I of the Center for Pastoral Effectiveness of the Rockies and am currently taking part in Track II. Additionally, I used funds provided by the VA through its Post-9/11 GI Bill to earn my fifth degree, a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Montana in 2018.

As a hobby, I collect slogan badges (aka, "buttons"). I've pursued this hobby since high school and have more than 8,500 buttons in the collection. I enjoy all kinds of music, but especially love big band, Drum & Bugle Corps and Gregorian Chants. I have been married to Belinda (Hammit) Alkula for twenty-two years. We share our home with "Wesley," a grey cat who adopted us when we lived in McCamey, Texas.