

Coordinator of Youth & Family Ministries

Grace Welcomes Sharman Harston

Sharman Hartson has been hired and begun her duties as our Coordinator of Youth and Family Ministries following a most favorable interview by the screening committee, a recommendation from the Personnel Board and approval by the Executive Committee of Planning Council. She was introduced to our young people and their families during Rally Day activities on Sunday, September 11.

Sharman comes to us from Springfield, Tennessee. She has served as a youth minister, an associate minister, interim minister and museum curator. She now lives in Dover. Sharman's sister along with some nieces and nephews reside in nearby Sugarcreek. Her mother lives in Mansfield where Sharman grew up.

This first weeks, Sharman has been busy meeting with parents, church leaders and others in order to get a good perspective on our needs and opportunities and to begin planning upcoming faith-based social programs and service projects. "Getting to Know You" and planning events with youth and families will be scheduled soon. Watch the bulletin and The Messenger for updates.

How did I get to Grace Lutheran Church? It all started just over a year ago. I lived in Springfield, Tennessee for over 24 years, and I realized the time was right to move back to Ohio. I sold my house, said good-bye to many good friends, and packed the U-Haul truck for one more long drive north to beautiful Ohio. I was born and raised in Mansfield, Ohio, where my mother still lives. My sister and her family live in the Sugarcreek area. I have been traveling to Tuscarawas County for many, many years, and was familiar with the area: the mall, restaurants, and attractions. But, I had never seen Dover Park! I like to walk (about 2-3 miles each day), and the beauty and serenity of the park provided an unexpected gift!

A friend of the family told me about the position at Grace Lutheran Church, and I felt like my ministry experiences would be a good fit for the position. I have served as a minister with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for over ten years. I graduated from Vanderbilt Divinity School in 2002, and was ordained the same year. I heard a call to ministry after serving as a lay leader, teacher, volunteer, and member of Central Christian Church, Springfield. My ministry has included: directing church camps, over-sight of women's fellowship groups and programing, interim ministry, mission trips, Christian Education and Youth pastor, and curator at Disciples of Christ Historical Society for over eight years. Most of these ministries were in or near Nashville, but I traveled extensively throughout Tennessee.

I was married to Ollie Hartson for over 25 years. He died in 2005. I have three step-sons and six grand-children, and they are scattered from California to Indiana to Ohio. I have a little dog, Casey, a 13 year old Dachshund. She has adjusted well to her new home in Dover. I enjoy reading, playing golf, walking, cooking, and playing cards. My greatest joy in the past two months has been spending more time with my three great nieces and nephew, ages 1 to 5. There will be another "great" little person in December.

I like exploring the area. I found a pottery shop in Holmes County, re-discovered the historic town of Zoar, visited Warther Museum, played golf in Sugarcreek, and shopped at Belding Village Mall. I saw the Dover band march through downtown and at the Band Preview! I like watching football, baseball, and golf. I have always been a Cleveland Browns and Indians fan.

I'm looking forward to being in relationship with Grace Lutheran Church through our service to God, the Dover community, and our children and youth. Peace and blessings, Sharman Hartson