

## *Meet the New Chair of the Bishop's Deacon Oversight Committee*

Originally from Western Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh area), I grew up, was baptized and confirmed in the community of Grace Lutheran Church in Rochester, PA. I was an active member of Luther League, volunteered in the nursery, VBS and Sunday School. Our youth group also attended the 1991 National Youth Gathering in Dallas, TX. Following high school, I attended a Lutheran college in northwestern Pennsylvania, Thiel College, and am an alumna of Sigma Kappa Sorority.



In 2005 I was offered a promotion at work that gave me the opportunity to relocate to Florida. My dad encouraged me to step out in faith and within a month, my daughter, Milla, and I had packed up and relocated to Florida! Within a few years my parents and brother joined us, my son Kaeden was born, and we have been here ever since!

A couple of years after relocating, and many church visits, we found our church family at St. Mark Lutheran in Dunedin. I've been at St. Mark for about 12 years and have enjoyed serving in so many ways. I served 4 years on church council, three years as the chair of the Generosity Team, assisted the pastors with confirmation class, youth group, and welcome committee. I have been the adult leader for the most recent trip to the National Youth Gathering in 2018 and a trip to Lutherock. I have always served as a part of the worship team, it's truly one of the ways that I feel most connected to God and to others. I have been leading our newly formed faith formation team and we have recently relaunched Sunday School and a weekday evening adult group. I also manage the website and social media outlets for St. Mark, it's a great way for me to learn and share faithful messages while using skills that are part of my professional wheelhouse. Currently, I also serve as the Conference Chair for the Suncoast Conference.

My deacon journey began with what I am so certain was the Holy Spirit at work. I discovered the diakonia program and had been mulling it over for months, but hadn't mentioned it to anyone. When I attended a conference gathering, the program was announced and the site was local. I started the two-year program that Fall, and the timing in my life could not have been more perfect. My fellow diakonia classmates and the program were exactly what I needed in that season of my life. During the program I learned more about becoming a deacon, eventually learning that the diakonia program could fulfill the educational requirements for becoming a deacon. Since we were in a transition period at St. Mark, I didn't pursue becoming a Synod Parish Deacon, once we called a pastor and we got to know one another, we both knew it was a natural next step. Serving as a Synod Parish Deacon has continued to be a blessing to me.

Professionally, I am currently the Marketing Operations & Events Manager for Beckwith Electric in Largo and have been with Beckwith for over 8 years. My kids, Milla (17) and Kaeden (9), and I have resided in Palm Harbor for 10 years.