

A cradle Episcopalian and a Presbyterian meet at a bar....Ok, that's not how it went down. We were actually introduced by a mutual friend who attended college with Brian and who was a counselor at St. George's Camp at Shrine Mont with Kate. So basically, we can credit Shrine Mont for getting us together.

In searching for a church home that felt right, we had 'tried out' services at several churches in the area, but nothing felt right. Some were too formal for our sensibilities, others did not exude the sense of community we had each grown up knowing. As we continued our search, we were married at Episcopal High School's Calloway Chapel and both of us commented on how comfortable we were in that space. It had both a welcoming feeling and a built-in family atmosphere that comes with being on a campus where students and teachers live in and share the same space. It reminded us of what we were searching to find.

So, when our good friends said they had visited Emmanuel and found it to be a really welcoming congregation, we decided to give it a try! Sure enough, as soon as we arrived we were welcomed at the door by the vestry greeter, the vibe in the sanctuary was neither formal nor pretentious. We felt like this could be our home. As we attended more services, we encountered sermons centered around current events and social justice issues, friendly and enthusiastic announcements about community outreach and opportunities to gather and socialize with other parishioners. I distinctly remember one Sunday, while probably trying to remain somewhat anonymous, Adam Schildge turning around in the pew after a service and saying "Hey, are you new to Emmanuel? I'm Adam." It felt comforting and supportive to be seen and recognized. We soon transferred our membership and have never looked back.

We have always felt at ease and welcome at EEC. We loved the Blessing of the Animals service this past October when the organ started playing the processional hymn and all the dogs starting howling in response and the blessing that our children's stuffed dog received. Everyone in the pews around us smiled and giggled and kept on singing — it was awesome.

Continuing in Emmanuel's open arms, two years ago our daughter started attending Emmanuel's Preschool. It has been an incredibly loving environment where children are loved, supported and encouraged to explore and wonder. She is thriving and it has connected us to the Emmanuel community even more. We cannot praise the teachers and programing at EPS enough! We think it is incredibly special for our children to be part of the church and preschool communities at our own neighborhood EEC.