

Honestly, after being ordained a priest in 2015 I never thought that I would be looking for a church home. I figured I would have interviews with search committees but that I would not have the traditional "church shopping" experience. And I was right in some ways. While serving as the Assistant Rector at Saint Luke's our first son, James, was born and I started to feel tugged to spend more time with him. Eventually I left full-time ministry to stay home with him in 2018. And so we did end up needing to go "church shopping" except I already had a pretty good idea of where I wanted to end up.

Emmanuel's Administrative Assistant, Karen O'Hern, had previously worked with me at Saint Luke's so I had heard a lot about Emmanuel. She had a sort of glow whenever she talked about Emmanuel. Everyone else we asked about Emmanuel had the same sort of glow, so I decided we needed to get some of that glow. We've been at Emmanuel ever since. We kept saying that we were going to look at a couple of other churches, but we just never did. And once our son started going to the preschool, it was a done deal. James just loves being at Emmanuel, whether for church or school. He is totally comfortable here and we feel that he has a place in this congregation. The spiritual highlight of my week is watching him take communion, with his grubby little hands outstretched before the altar.

And of course, part of why I was attracted to Emmanuel is that I love being around Chuck and Joani. I have learned so much from them. Their sermons have encouraged me to try different styles of preaching. I really appreciate how relaxed they are about everything. I love that when David and James knocked over a hurricane candle during a service, that Joani asked if everyone was OK over her mike. And even after this incident Chuck and Joani have been generous enough to let me be a priest occasionally at Emmanuel. I finally feel like I am in the right place, and I am grateful to have the chance to blend my two vocations.

Finally, I can't imagine a church fussing more about the birth of a baby than Emmanuel fussed over Charlie. We loved his red rose in the chapel and his name being listed in the prayers. My mom literally cried over this. We have been touched by his sweet little baby block and his hospital picture on the bulletin board in the parish hall. And his baptism was just perfect. I was so relieved that Chuck and Joani would allow a baptism in Lent, so that my sister could be there since her only weekends off were in Lent. And the actual day was so special. Our family felt very welcome and it was so meaningful to be up there with him and know that when everyone said; "We will with God's help" that it was true. I know that Emmanuel will keep up their end of the bargain and that Charlie will be at Emmanuel for a long while.