



Shaw Brewer: Certified Lay Servant

How long have you been a member at BUMC and how did you get connected here?

Shaw: I have been a member of BUMC for about seven years, but I attended for six years before that. I wanted to find a Methodist church in Bethesda and after driving past BUMC I decided to give it a try. It turns out that on that day the sermon was exactly what I needed. I also attended a young adult Sunday school where we looked at the music of U2 and how it related to our Christian beliefs. A couple of weeks later I had lost my phone. Someone figured out it was mine and knew exactly where to return it. As weird as it may seem, when this happened, I remember feeling that I found my home, that these people cared about me. I knew I fit in and that this is where I belonged. The only reason it took me so long to transfer my membership is that I hated transferring from the church I had been member of since birth. But, transferring was the right choice, and I am able to fulfill my membership vows here. Since then, I have never looked back.

What areas of ministry have you been involved with at BUMC?

Shaw: One of the things that I love most about BUMC is the fact that I have been able to be involved in so many vibrant ministries. I have led small groups and taught Sunday school. I have also had the opportunity to be on Church Council as chair of the Community Life Committee. There I have had the privilege of organizing many events, as well as the Sunday morning coffee hour, with my co-chair Sarah Moore. I am also on SPRC and I am our delegate to Annual Conference. I look forward to continuing my work on council, in the gun violence prevention group, and I am trying to begin a new prayer ministry.

Tell us about some of your experiences with the United Methodist Church beyond the local church.

Shaw: I moved to Washington DC to attend Wesley Theological Seminary and through a class there, I had the opportunity to attend the 2012 General Conference in Tampa, Florida. This experience taught me about how decisions that affect United Methodists around the world are made. It also prepared me for my position at the General Board of Church and Society, where we work to help our denomination implement our Social Principles, our guide on social issues, and the resolutions passed by General Conference, which are our UMC stances on specific issues such as health care for all and gun violence. It also helped me prepare to vote on motions as a delegate at Annual Conference and think through issues that affect our congregation as a delegate to Annual Conference. I hope and pray that I am able to represent our congregation there well.

You were recently recognized as a Certified Lay Servant at BUMC. Tell us more about that role and how you hope to live into that call through BUMC?

Shaw: As a Lay Servant, I am hoping to deepen my relationship to Christ and inspire others to do the same. I hope to do this through continued participation and leadership in small groups. Additionally, I will be working on helping to further develop our prayer ministries. The training I received as a Lay Servant will help me be to be a caring partner with those in our community. Further, as a Lay Servant, I serve as a resource to assist the pastors as needed.

What is something you really appreciate about the Methodist tradition?

Shaw: I love the United Methodist theology. In particular, I love the emphasis that the United Methodist Church places on grace and the guidance it gives us throughout our faith journey. First, grace is at work in our lives before we are even aware of it, seeking us and calling us toward God, since birth (prevenient grace). There is grace that reconciles us with God as we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior (justifying grace). Then, grace that continues to work in our lives that leads us towards being more perfect in love (sanctifying grace). This emphasis on grace is something that makes us unique.

Who or what inspires you in your faith journey?

Shaw: I am a strong believer in community and find that so many people in my life have inspired me in my faith journey. One of the places I find this most is at BUMC. In worship, small groups, and in one-on-one conversations I always find my faith challenged and strengthened here. I always feel a great deal of support as we share our joys and concerns with each other. Without this, I believe faith would be much harder to sustain. Outside of our church I am also inspired by my father and my brother. My father is an amazing example of what it means to be humble, kind and loving to all of those around him every day. My brother inspires me because he has great inner strength and knows the right thing to do. My goal is to be there for others like our church, be loving like my dad, and strong like my brother.

Originally published in The Messenger, January 2019