

OUR PATH FORWARD IN
Children and Family Ministries

REV. AUDREY THORNE
Lake Fellow in Parish Ministry





A GIFT OF *Pure Grace*

Some moments in the life of a congregation feel like a gift of pure grace.

This is one of them.

When Audrey Thorne arrived at Second in the summer of 2024 as a Lake Fellow, we knew how fortunate we were to have someone with her combination of pastoral gifts, spiritual maturity, and deep commitment to congregational ministry. When she discerned a call to put down roots in Indianapolis and, separately, an opportunity emerged for her to provide leadership in a transitional time for Children and Family Ministries, we sensed that the Spirit was moving. When it became clear that there might be a path for her to remain at Second, I found myself thinking: of course. This is what it looks like when God is ahead of us.



“This is what it looks like when *God is ahead of us.*”

Over the last eight months, members of every age have experienced the gifts of Audrey’s ministry. You have shared your stories with me. Colleagues on our staff team have joined that chorus, hoping for the chance to continue the good work they have begun alongside Audrey.

The Whitewater Valley Presbytery's process for calling a pre-identified candidate is designed for exactly this kind of moment — when a congregation and a pastor have already begun the work of mutual discernment, and when the fit is evident to everyone paying attention. We are grateful for this pathway provided by the Presbytery’s Commission on Ministry, and we are grateful for the unanimous and enthusiastic support of this process from Second’s Session.

Second Presbyterian has a long history of exceptional ministry with children and families. Audrey brings to this work not only deep experience — from Tokyo to Indianapolis — but a theological conviction that shapes everything she does: that how a church welcomes its youngest members reveals what it believes about the gospel. I share that conviction. And I believe that under her leadership, our Children and Family Ministries will flourish in ways that will shape this congregation for generations. Indeed, that shaping has already begun. The process of discernment enabled by the Presbytery’s process offers us the gift of continuity and the invitation to dream together of a bright future.

I invite you to read Audrey's own words, to attend the congregational meeting on April 12, and to join me in welcoming Rev. Audrey Thorne into this new chapter of ministry among us. Thanks be to God!

With peace,
Rev. Chris Henry





A CALL TO *Stay*

When I arrived at Second nearly two years ago for the Lake Fellow Residency, I had no doubt that God had called me here. I quickly fell in love with this community and felt right away that I was building relationships that would last for the rest of my life. Not long after I arrived, I discerned a call to remain in Indianapolis. After years of moving for work and study, I knew that living into my deepest values of rootedness and community would require staying in one place. In Indianapolis, and at Second, I found that God had already prepared a place where I could truly put down roots and flourish. While the call to remain in Indianapolis became clear, I never could have dreamed that God would make a way for me to stay at Second.

As is often true in ministry and in life, we don't always know what we're signing up for when we first set out. It has been a joyful surprise that my time as a Lake Fellow has facilitated my return to Children and Family Ministries, an area of ministry that has shaped every part of my pastoral identity. Stepping into this role last fall felt like a natural fit. My previous work as Director of Children and Youth Ministries at Tokyo Union Church, along with years of ministry with children, has made me the pastor and the person that I am.



“God had already prepared a place where I could
truly put down roots and flourish.”

A fierce love and advocacy for children will be at the heart of my ministry, no matter where I go or what role I am in. I believe that how we welcome and care for the most vulnerable among us is the measure of who we are. When children are safe, delighted in, and included as full participants in the church, we have truly learned what it means to see the way God sees and love the way God loves.

To learn that there might be a way for me to remain at Second in this work I love so much has been surprising and deeply moving. It feels like the answer to a prayer I wouldn't have dared pray because it was too much to ask for. I am honored to be considered by Second for such a precious task and grateful to the Whitewater Valley Presbytery for creating a path for churches to call pre-identified candidates. The process of mutual discernment in a pastoral call is deeply important to me, and I am overjoyed for the opportunity to continue that discernment together.

With so much love,
Rev. Audrey Thorne



A PATHWAY FOR *Shared Calling*

At Second, we believe there are moments in the life of the church when a shared sense of calling becomes clear. Through our time of ministry and discernment together, we have experienced just such a moment—one where we trust that God is already at work, guiding both Rev. Audrey Thorne and our congregation forward.



Whitewater Valley Presbytery's process for calling a pre-identified candidate is designed for exactly this kind of moment.

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**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
TO ELECT THE APNC**

Upon COM approval, the congregation elects the APNC.

APRIL 12

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THE APNC WORK

The APNC will conduct interviews with the pre-identified candidate. The committee and the candidate will engage in discernment together.

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**CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING**

Following COM approval, the Session calls a congregational meeting. At this meeting, the APNC presents its report, and the congregation votes to request the Presbytery install the candidate to the pastoral position, according to the Terms of Call.

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**PRESBYTERY
INSTALLATION**

Upon congregational approval, the Presbytery completes the process by installing the candidate.

MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON
ABOUT OUR SEARCH FOR AN
Associate Pastor of Engagement



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