

My name is Lisa Bradley. I am a “P.K.” (a “preacher’s kid”). When my father began his ministry in the United Methodist Church, I was 13. I had a strong desire to learn to play the piano. My parents found a teacher for me and a piano and I started learning how to play.

As it happened, one of the four little country churches where my Dad was pastoring had a need for a pianist. When the congregation learned I was taking piano lessons they ask me to play the hymns I had learned during the worship service on Sunday. I only knew a couple of hymns at that time but they were glad to sing the same hymns every week until I learned another one. My first hymn was “Just As I Am” and this loving congregation sang it every week for what seemed like forever. And they kept encouraging me to learn to play and always appreciated the effort I gave. Their encouragement made a profound impact on my life. Little did I know at this time what God’s plans were for me, but I have been playing the piano in church ever since.

I became a part of Bethesda UMC 17 years ago when I moved to the Haw Creek Community. I have spent most of my years at Bethesda volunteering to play the piano, leading the choir, organizing and directing cantata’s, and serving in a leadership capacity within the church.

Bethesda has been “Walking in Faith” the last several years in its ministry and reconstruction. And I have been encouraged to do the same. I’ve had a strong desire to learn to play the guitar for some time, but I also knew how difficult the learning process could be. prayerfully, I signed up for guitar lessons before I owned a guitar. Since I have begun this new venture my music ministry and my life have been shaped in exciting ways I’d never imagined. I have had to step out of my comfort zone again and again and yet the love of music and my love of Christ has kept encouraging me to step out further, following my call.

Music has always played an important role in our Sunday worship at Bethesda; but now our singing is no longer accompanied by piano alone. I have been joined by a rhythm guitar, a bass guitar, and a stand-up bass. And I also play the guitar or harmonium depending on the song. Our music is carefully chosen each week to compliment the Gospel message and enhance the mood of worship. We make an effort to include a variety of songs ranging from traditional to modern; from praise to bluegrass gospel. Our goal is to promote enthusiasm and joy; to deepen the faith of our congregation. We seek to touch the hearts of the visitors and members alike. Our desire is to promote spiritual and numerical growth in our church, reinforcing our mission and purpose.

The prophet Jeremiah writes, “For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for the good and not disaster, to give you a future and a hope.” I didn’t realize at the age of 13 that God, through a loving congregation, was already calling me to a music ministry that would bless my life. I have been and continue to be thankful to be a part of the bright new future at Bethesda U.M.C..

Lisa Bradley