

## **Mariann Edgar Budde: Autobiographical Statement**

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I was born in New Jersey, the younger of two daughters. Our mother emigrated from Sweden as a young adult; our father was adopted into a family with deep Yankee roots. They divorced shortly after I was born. From my mother, I have inherited a strong work ethic, a love of adventure, and the gift of her unconditional love. Like my father, I love music, reading, and watching football games. My Swedish grandparents influenced me deeply, as did members of my father's family.

I attended an Episcopal church as a child, but my first conscious experiences of Jesus were in the context of a fundamentalist church that I was drawn to as a teenager. That faith community gave me a place to belong and also prompted my first crisis of faith, for I could never reconcile the love of God that I felt there with its exclusivist understanding of salvation. I was living in Colorado with my father at the time. When I returned to live with my mother, the Episcopal priest of my childhood helped me find a way to integrate a deep, personal faith in Jesus with an inquiring intellect and openness to the world. The congregation welcomed me back and taught me foundational lessons of community life.

As a young adult, my understanding of faith grew more political and committed to justice. Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker, the example of martyred missionaries in Central America, and the Sanctuary Movement all shaped me as I sought to live my faith in the world. After college, I worked in Tucson, Arizona with the Methodist Church, among homeless people, refugees, and the working poor. Yet I kept returning to the Episcopal Church as my spiritual home, and at age 24, to my amazement and gratitude, I was accepted as a postulant for Holy Orders.

My husband Paul and I spent our first year of marriage in Honduras, as volunteers at an Episcopal home and school for abandoned boys. Because I had received my call on the margins of the church, I assumed that my priesthood would be lived there. But after seminary, we moved with our infant son to Ohio where I began life as a parish priest. I discovered there a love and aptitude for parish leadership that continues to this day.

In Ohio, I worked alongside a brilliant, yet troubled priest whose behavior eventually ended his priesthood and deeply wounded the congregation. A providential conversation guided me to the work of Rabbi Edwin Friedman whose insights guided me through that turbulent time. Twice a year for over a decade I attended his clergy seminars in order to learn family systems theory and principles of healthy leadership.

In 1993, St. John's, Minneapolis called me to be its rector. Paul and I traveled across the Midwest, now with two young sons, to establish our lives here. St. John's is a thoughtful, passionate congregation with a marvelous sense of humor and capacity for risk in faithfulness to Christ. I count St. John's as one of the great blessings of my life.

I have learned that anything worth doing takes time. Leading a parish well, raising a family well, being faithful in any realm of life and ministry takes time, perseverance and faith. The miracle of the loaves and fishes is the spiritual foundation upon which I depend daily. I am called to leadership more than prophecy, in that my vocation is grounded in the work of *aligning* the church to the visions God has given us, taking small, steady steps to transform our lives, congregations, and structures to better serve God's mission in the world.