

## *Rev. Ann Asper Wilson* *Celebrating 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ordination*



**MINISTRY:** In 1974, the year I was ordained, St Louis congregations willing to call a woman were essentially non-existent. So, my first pastorate was in IL South Conference at Bethel – Cahokia and Friedens – Caseyville. I learned so much from the Bethel folks and I loved them dearly. I stayed 7 years.

Then the incoming Eden president, Dr. Malcolm Warford, asked if I come work at Eden. One assignment I took on was Director of Continuing Education. I stayed four years. Missing the parish, I returned to IL South and served as interim pastor in seven congregations: Marine, New Athens, Staunton, Nashville, Carlyle, Evangelical (Webster Groves) and St Paul – Belleville.

By the mid-1990's my children were growing older, and I returned to full-time parish ministry as senior minister at St Paul – Belleville. I stayed there until 2005, and then was called to First Congregational UCC of St Louis – Clayton until I retired in 2012. I have loved every congregation I have been called to serve.

**SERVICE TO THE CHURCH AND COMMUNITY:** I was given many opportunities to serve beyond the local church. I was president of the kids' school's PTA, and then was elected to the local School Board for several terms. I have been on a variety of Boards, including Eden Seminary (2 twelve-year terms), Care and Counseling, Deaconess Foundation, Emmaus Homes, Provident Counseling. I co-chaired the St Louis Assoc Committee on Ministry for four years. I have served on the Board on Ministerial Assistance of the Pension Boards. In 1981 I was the Worship Leader at the General Synod in Rochester, NY.

**PERSONAL:** My husband and I raised three amazing children. Son Harry ('77) and daughter Lucy ('79) were born while I was serving Bethel UCC – Cahokia IL and son Sam ('82) was born while I was working at Eden. They are now scattered from east coast to west. We have one granddaughter, Lena, who is almost 4 and lives too far away in Oakland, CA. Harry and I live now in a condo in St Louis.

I consider myself a healthy person, having had Stage 1 breast cancer in 2002 with no recurrence, coronary artery bypass over 20 years ago in 2004, with a half dozen stents since then. Two years ago, I was diagnosed with Parkinson's. I have learned to take my diet, exercise and stress level as keys to maintaining a healthy life. I exercise 6 days a week. I am focusing now on incorporating high intensity cardio into my routine, along with Rock Steady Boxing, a terrific program for folks with PD.

I love to stay in close touch with friends and family. I exercise and read a lot (and listen to audio books/podcasts). I teach poetry at Second Presbyterian Church 4 weeks a year. I dream of traveling, but don't get enough opportunity.

**THOUGHTS:** I have stayed close to Eden Seminary these past fifty years, in large part because of my service as a Trustee. I love our seminary and am grateful for all it has given me. I believe President David Greenhaw saw Eden through many precarious moments, with creativity and courage. Now our current President, Dr. Deb Krause, is just as creative and courageous, in her own unique and faithful way. Eden has been blessed by its wonderful faculty, staff, students and trustees. Eden set me on a path into a deeply fulfilling life of ministry.