

Joanna Harader to Candidate at BCMC May 3-5, 2024

Joanna is currently the pastor at Peace Mennonite Church in Lawrence, Kansas where she's served as its pastor since June 2006 – just shy of 18 years. She is a gifted preacher, teacher, and advocate for the marginalized, and skilled at making Scripture relevant to our lives today. Those who know her well describe Joanna as authentic, compassionate, and patient. She is well-grounded in Anabaptist beliefs and is an active and accomplished writer. Generating worship materials that echo Scripture in a contemporary setting gives her joy.

Joanna grew up in the *American* Baptist tradition, the child of two pastors. She was drawn to the Mennonite faith while in graduate school, when she and her husband became members of Peace Mennonite. It was her experience at this congregation, along with teaching Bible and theology classes at Ottawa University (Ottawa, KS), that drew her to Mennonites and to being a pastor. Joanna holds a BA in creative writing from Emory & Henry College (now Emory & Henry University at Emory, VA), a Master of Theological Studies from Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary (now Palmer Theological Seminary at St. David's, PA), a Master in English Literature from the University of Kansas at Lawrence, KS, and a Master of Divinity from Central Baptist Theological Seminary at Shawnee, KS.

Joanna and her husband, Ryan Ellett, have served as foster parents and currently have three young adult children and one 3-year-old granddaughter. James and Jasmine, along with granddaughter Camilla, live and work in Lawrence. Grace is in her second year of college, currently studying abroad in Chile. Ryan, who holds a Ph.D. from the University of Kansas in curriculum and development, works with the Lawrence school system and plans to remain in his current position for the immediate future, which means Joanna and Ryan plan to maintain two households. If BCMC calls Joanna, she will be full-time with BCMC.

Joanna joyfully relates to college students and at the request of some students from KU formed a Bible study group on campus. She enjoys playing board games and has a soft spot for her cat and her dog, Toni, who would move with her to Newton. Joanna allows you to be yourself without being judged and without fear that your problems, personality, or questions will overwhelm her. She is grounded in prayer and has chosen the Mennonite expression of faith.

