

RE Ann Carlson
Kenwood Presbyterian Church
Candidate for Commissioned Ruling Elder

Where do I begin to tell my story and how I came to be here today? I suppose I will begin at the beginning. I have been a life-long Presbyterian. I was baptized several weeks after my birth by Rev. Robert Riddle at the Kenwood Presbyterian Church. I was confirmed by Rev. Kenneth Shick when I was twelve years old and have continued all my life to be a member of Kenwood Presbyterian Church. Even when my husband and I moved from the Kenwood community in 2010 we continued to travel twenty-five miles each way every Sunday for worship and at other times where there has been a reason to be present at Kenwood. My roots go deep at Kenwood. My parents were both 9 years old when Kenwood was first incorporated in 1928 and their parents were among the ninety-two charter members of the church. As an adult my Dad served as both a Deacon and an Elder and was honored to be named an Elder Emeritus. My Mom served with the women of the church, cooking and hosting many meals.

As a youngster I have fond memories of Sunday School classes, summer Bible School, and church carnivals. I have a very real memory of the time when I was 4 or 5 years old and after singing *Jesus Loves Me* many times in Sunday School, on one Sunday as I was singing the familiar words a sudden spark entered my mind and I thought “Wow! Jesus loves me!” I did not know a whole lot about Jesus at that age, but I did know that he was God’s Son and an amazing guy and what a privilege it was that He loved me.

My years in Sunday School and my studies to prepare for confirmation taught me the joy of learning about God and His Son Jesus which led me to a lifelong desire to be a good Christian and to be actively involved in the work and mission of my church. After years of service on several different church committees and

participation in all church activities, I proudly followed in my father's footsteps when I was ordained as a Ruling Elder in 1988. I was also honored as an Elder Emeritus in 2021.

All this history serves to emphasize my deep and sincere dedication to our God, my church and the Kenwood congregation. I have served as a Ruling Elder, Clerk of the Session, and church treasurer, and find great satisfaction in serving our Lord. I have been called upon to lead worship when our pastor was unable to be present, and more recently in the absence of an ordained pastor. Since there are currently multiple churches in the Baltimore Presbytery that are without Teaching Elders and therefore the ability to schedule ordained ministers to fill our pulpit and officiate at the Lord's Table on Sundays is becoming more difficult. This is where I saw an opportunity to step up and serve my congregation in yet another way by becoming a Commissioned Ruling Elder. The classes I attended in preparation for this commission were wonderful. The curriculum was exciting, the instructors were amazing and I also learned a great deal from other students in the classes. This was a great learning experience and comes with great gratification in my ability to lead God's people.

John 20:21 says "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." I believe that God is inviting me and sending me to continue to serve the people of Kenwood by using the talents God has given me. It is to enhance and expand my ability to serve Kenwood that I seek the authority to officiate at the Lord's Table as a Commissioned Ruling Elder.

My favorite Bible verse continues to be my daily words of inspiration and encouragement as I move along in my service to God and my church. Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Him who gives me strength." I believe God is encouraging me to move forward in my leadership role and will give me the strength to succeed.