

Christ United Methodist Church

Meet Our Staff

The Pastoral Team

Pastor Gary L. Nicholson

Pastor Nicholson was appointed Lead Pastor of Christ United Methodist Church in July, 2016. He most recently served as District Superintendent of the Northwest District of the Eastern PA United Methodist Conference. Pastor Nicholson also has pastored at UM churches in Bangor, Jarrettsville, Palmyra, East Stroudsburg and Pottstown. He received his Bachelors' Degree in History from Albright University and is Master of Divinity from Duke University Divinity School.

"God's amazing love has touched my life and I want to extend that love to others in all I do or say. I am committed to helping people meet Christ, become more like Christ and have a Christ-like impact on their community."

"I enjoy good conversation, time with nature and listening to classical music. I am curious about the world, compassionate with the hurting and eager to learn others' stories. Family is very important to me."

Married to wife Pamela S. Nicholson, they are parents to two grown children, Mark Nicholson of Greenville, SC and Rachel Nicholson of Kandern, Germany.

Contact Pastor Nicholson at gary.nicholson@cumclansdale.org.



Pastor Tawny Bernhardt



Our Pastor of Congregational Care since July of 2013, Pastor Bernhardt is a graduate of Messiah College and Duke Divinity School, as well as receiving post-graduate chaplaincy training at WakeMed Hospital in Raleigh, NC. She and her husband, Paul (and their cat, Gwen), grew up near Lancaster County.

"I received a call to pastoral ministry when I was a junior in high school. I'm called to engage those outside the church, nurture new disciples and encourage mature disciples in order that all persons can grow in their discipleship and find their place in the body of Christ."

Her interests are crafts, reading, taking walks and Tawny loves ANYTHING chocolate! Contact Pastor Bernhardt at tawny.bernhardt@cumclansdale.org.

Pastor Eric Chelton

Assistant Pastor Chelton has been a part of Christ Church for 10 years, but in July of 2014, he officially joined the staff in his current role. Since college, he has worked in the Adult MH/MR field and in Long-Term Care facilities, including his ongoing full-time position as an Executive Director of a senior personal-care facility.

"I truly love what I am doing for the church. I enjoy visiting people in the hospital, working with the committees and especially watching the confirmands grow. God pushes me, and has given me such a great opportunity to serve here. I really do have so much fun!"

Eric is married to our church's music director, Miki, and together they are raising two daughters, a pair of dogs, a cat and a guinea pig. Contact Pastor Chelton at eric.chelton@cumclansdale.org.



Our Music Staff

Miki Chelton has been the music director at Christ Church since 2007. She holds two degrees: a baccalaureate degree in music education from Mansfield University and a graduate degree in music therapy from Immaculata College. She directs the Chancel (adult) Choir and three of our bell choirs. Miki has been married to our own pastor Eric since 2001, plays mom to daughters Belle and Lucy and helps take care of dogs—Molly & Daisy, cat—Gus and guinea pig—Sylvester.

"I enjoy my choirs because the people I work with are wonderful and great musicians and make me smile! They help me in many ways and forgive me when I mess up."

Miki also serves as an assistant Girl Scout Leader (and cookie mom), enjoys sewing, knitting, reading, geocaching and laughing! **Contact Miki at miki.chelton@cumclansdale.org.**



Katie Campbell, our organist since 2008, is a music teacher and choral director at the Pennbrook Middle School in the North Penn School District. She earned her Bachelors' Degree from Syracuse University and a Master's Degree from Ithaca College, both in music education and organ. She also studied abroad at the Conservatoire de Strasbourg in France. Katie directs our Youth Choir, is active in school and community events and teaches voice and organ.

Katie's family has a long music history. "While not professional musicians, my dad was a church choir director and a Mummer on the baritone sax and my mom played lyre and trombone in the marching band. Three of the four children in my family are professional music teachers, and the 4th is a particle accelerator physicist."

"I had been playing the piano since 1990 and started organ lessons my junior year of high school after being offered a once-a-month organist job at an Anglican church and then fell in love with the organ!"

Katie grew up in the Lansdale area and now lives there with her husband, Iain, and their son Malcolm and daughter Evangeline. If you want to make her smile, she loves puns!

Contact Katie at katie.campbell@cumclansdale.org.

Sherry Harris directs our upper elementary Carol Choir (where she has served as Director for over 10 years!) and also our youngest choir, The Precious Angels. She directs our annual Sunday School pageant, teaches Sunday school and rings in the Gloria Dei Bell Choir. Sherry holds a Bachelor's degree from Upstate Medical Center and is Co-President of the North Penn Area Choristers Guild.

"One of the most important aspects of my role as Children's Choir Director is to help the children learn about God and His amazing love for them. Through scripture-based music, I am able to teach the children about our Lord and help them grow as they begin their Christian walk. My hope for all of the children is that they know they are cared for and are encouraged in their faith journey. I hope to inspire a life-long love of music in them as well as help them to grow musically as they serve the Lord. I am filled with gratitude and thanksgiving for the privilege of ministering to the children at Christ Church."

She is married to husband Bruce and the mother of daughters Kim, Christina and Carrie. **Contact Sherry at sherry.harris@cumclansdale.org.**



Linda Wagner has been a member of our music staff for 13 years and directs the Cherub Choir (lower elementary) and Melody Chimes (the children's bell choir) and sings in the Chancel Choir. Linda grew up singing in church choirs and school choruses. She also studied piano for 9 years and the trumpet for 4 years.

"Music has been a large part of my life since my early elementary school years, and I had a wonderful example in my mother who has served as a church pianist/organist for 60 years and a choir director for many of those years. I enjoy working with the children in our church and continue to be inspired by them and their parents. I love teaching the children about music and how we can use music to praise God."

Linda shares her down time with husband Mike and daughter Joanna. She works for Merck as a biologist. **Contact Linda at linda.wagner@cumclansdale.org.**



Elysa Dalbow has been worshipping at Christ Church since her childhood and has been a member of our music staff for over 10 years. She directs the Agape Ringers, our youth bell choir, and leads our contemporary praise band (Fish Food) and the youth praise band (Grace in Progress). Elysa graduated from West Chester University in 2003 with a Bachelors' Degree in Liberal Studies and a minor in music.

"I love being a part of the music ministry at Christ UMC. I'm inspired and blessed on a regular basis by the members of my groups. I'm thankful for the challenges of leading worship, as those challenges help me find solutions that lead to new ways to praise God."

Elysa is a Project Manager at Bracket in Langhorne, PA and lives in North Wales with her husband Brian and their cats Ninja and Chub Chub. **Contact Elysa at elysa.dalbow@cumclansdale.org.**

Christian Education/Preschool Staff



Mary Conroy has filled the role of Preschool Director for the past 16 years. She received her undergraduate degree in Social Services with focus on Early Childhood Development from the University of Connecticut and a Master's of Education in Early Childhood Special Education. She began her career teaching kindergarteners with emotional and behavioral issues in the Boston area. Mary came to Christ Church first as a preschool parent, then later moved up through the ranks of assistant teacher, lead teacher and eventually director in 1999.

"Wisdom begins with wonder"—Socrates. "This well-known quote captures the essence of what excites me about early childhood education. Preschool-aged children embrace their early experiences with such an awe and wonder that never fails to keep me inspired. The sweetness, authenticity and openness of the young child is, at once, humbling and hopeful and reminds me certainly of how fortunate I am for the privilege of working in early childhood education."

Mary spends her time outside church with husband Bob and twin daughters Sarah and Cait. **Contact Mary at mary.conroy@cumclansdale.org.**

Julian Law is our Director of Student Ministries and has been in that role since the fall of 2014 after relocating from Ohio with his wife, Heather and their daughter Adalynn. Julian holds a degree in Bible and Theology from Malone University and has faithfully attended church all his life.

"I do what I do because I care about the youth and their spiritual well-being. I want them to be tomorrow's pastors, teachers, nurses—or whatever else they choose to be—who have a solid Christian foundation. I want them to be firmly rooted in truth and love of Jesus Christ. It is my passion and prayer that this happens." **Contact Julian at julian.law@cumclansdale.org.**



Church Office Staff



Nikki Young joined the Christ Church team in early 2015 and serves as our Office Manager. She received a Communications/Journalism degree from Shippensburg University and previously worked at Penn State College of Medicine processing grants.

Nikki lives in Harleysville with husband Josh and son Sammy. She is also mom to Aaron (who passed away as an infant).

"I have always loved helping people and I am happy to help out in whatever ways I can at the church. I am very much enjoying seeing all the good deeds this church does and I'm happy to have a small role in that."

"I love spending time with my family and being outside as much as possible. Sammy keeps us on our toes and is a very active child. We also do a lot to honor the memory of our son Aaron! **Contact Nikki at nikki.young@cumclansdale.org.**

Stephanie Williams fills the role of Office Assistant. She holds a Telecommunications degree from Kutztown University.

A member of CUMC since 2010, she joined the staff in the fall of 2014. Stephanie is the face behind our monthly newsletter, the *Evangel*, and also puts our order of worship and bulletin in the hands of our congregants each week.

Married to husband Dave for over 25 years and mom to daughter Rachel, she enjoys the ability to work with the people of Christ Church and put a spotlight on the work being done by many of the groups that serve our congregation and the surrounding community. **Contact Stephanie at secretary@cumclansdale.org.**

