

Church welcomes new lead pastor

Grace Lutheran Church is welcoming Rev. Daniel Heitshusen (pronounced height-susan) as its new lead pastor.

Heitshusen grew up as the son of a pastor in Houston and said his father's influence on him was significant.

"My dad was hugely influential," he said. "I also spent quite a bit of time with other pastors while growing up, asking questions about God, my faith, and my purpose."

As a teenager, he attended many youth retreats and a pastor encouraged him to explore church vocations.

"He explained the sacraments and reminded me that people are in need of other people — and that the best way to bring that to the world is through Christ. That's when I decided the pastoral route would be the

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best for me," Heitshusen said. He pursued pastoral training at Concordia Seminary in Seward, Neb., a program that typically takes four years.

However, he stayed for an additional year after meeting his wife, Rachel, who holds a master's degree in art, theology.

She specialized in spiritual care and is a certified deaconess.

Today, the Heitshusens are enjoying life with their one-year-old daughter.

Heitshusen: "Outside of ministry, I enjoy spending time with friends and

family, playing games, going on walks, tinkering with technology, and entry-level woodworking."

Reflecting on his seminary years, Heitshusen admitted that learning Greek and Hebrew was one of the hardest parts of training.

"It was extremely important but also hugely intimidating. Still, I did much better than I expected," he said.

Heitshusen described his pastoral calling as both exciting and humbling.

"One never knows what to expect with the call process, but I've been very pleased with where God has placed me," he said. "My

wife is a wonderful partner and so supportive in daily life and in ministry.

"My goals are listening, learning, and serving. I want to understand the vision the church already has. I especially want to create an environment during our service times that children can feel safe to learn and feel like they belong there."

Jesus said, "Don't hinder the children from coming to me."

Grace Lutheran Church has service on Sundays at 9 a.m. They are located at 1120 S. Park St. in Aurora, and every age is welcome.

For more information, call (417) 678-3603.



Rev. Daniel Heitshusen