



Diane and Walter Diekroger

Both Diane and Walter are life-long Lutherans. Diane was born on the East side of Detroit and is the oldest of four children, three sisters and a brother. Her father sold insurance and eventually owned his own agency. Her family moved from Detroit to Wayne, PA and again to Northville, MI, where she finished high school. Diane decided to attend Concordia College-Ann Arbor for two years and then Valparaiso University, where she earned her Bachelor's Degree in Social Work.

Walter was born and grew up in the Bronx, NY, not far from the Bronx Zoo. Walter was also the oldest child in the family having three sisters. His family eventually moved to Bergenfield, NJ. His father, a banker, commuted everyday to New York City. After high school Walter attended Concordia College in Bronxville for two years and then at Concordia College in Fort Wayne, IN, for two years in preparation for entering the seminary. He attended the MO Synod St. Louis Seminary. During that time, he met Diane on a blind date, while Diane was completing her Masters degree in Social Work at Washington University. They married prior to the one year of internship, which Walter served in Denver at Trinity Lutheran Church. After the internship, Walter and Diane remained in St. Louis, while Walter was Pastor of an African American Congregation in Kinloch, MO.

They have two sons. Andrew, the oldest, is in sales and lives in Florida with his wife of three years and her son. Jim, is a family doctor at the Neighborhood Family Practice Clinic in Cleveland. Jim's wife is also a doctor in Behavioral Pediatrics at University Hospital's Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital. They have two daughters ages, seven and four.

Walter decided to move on and explore other Lutheran denominations. He was a substitute Pastor in several LCA churches, worked full time for the St. Louis County, which included some bus driving, and was involved in Clinical Pastoral Education at two St. Louis hospitals. Eventually Walter accepted a call as Pastor at a Missouri Synod church in Chillicothe, OH. He remained there nine years, and then he took a position in what he found was his real passion, chaplaincy work, at the VA Hospital. Meanwhile the boys were growing up, and Diane worked several jobs including school social work, teaching piano lessons and music in a Lutheran School, and even lifeguarding and instructing swim lessons at the YMCA. She taught Ohio University Counseling courses at the Chillicothe Correctional Institution for ten years. Eventually she started taking advanced classes at Ohio University toward her PhD. After earning her PhD, she remained on the staff at Ohio University Chillicothe Campus, where she started the Institutional Equity and Education Abroad Programs and was involved in other projects as well.

Diane and Walter moved to the west side of Cleveland to be closer to son Jim and his family. They are retired now but hardly idle. Diane loves quilting and is active in POP's Comfort Quilters. She is involved in Bible Study, book discussion groups, plays clarinet with the Patriot Band, loves biking and hiking and regularly works out at the French Creek YMCA. Diane also plays the organ. She is hoping to be an AARP Tax-Aide Volunteer this year, as she has been in the past. Not to be outdone, Walter reads all kinds of books, plays the tuba in the Patriot Band, and also bikes, hikes, swims and works out at the YMCA. In Chillicothe, Walter was involved in volunteer work for a Federal Credit Union and a Home Hospice Volunteer. Along with Diane, he is currently involved in the POP Monday night SOAP Bible Study.

They usually attend the POP Traditional Service. When they were looking for a church, they were attracted to Prince of Peace because of the dynamic POP website, the traditional service, the music, and the Bible Study opportunities. When I asked them if they wanted to mention anything else, they said they have had a long and wonderful association with the AFS Foreign Exchange Student program. Walter was an exchange student himself in Germany, when he was 16, where he lived with a Pastor and his family. Walter and Diane have hosted three year-long exchange students, from Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Chile. And their son, Jim, spent a year in France as an exchange student.

I know you will love these two wonderful, active Christians. Please give them a warm welcome when you meet them.

By Dick Hardy, Profile Reporter