



Rev. Andrew J. Carlson, Sr.
M.Div., B.A., A.A.

Pastor Carlson grew up with twenty-two other siblings in a log cabin in the back woods of Alaska (120 miles from the Arctic Circle). It was a multi-ethnic family with adopted brothers and sisters from Japan, India, Korea, Romania, Alaska native, and two African-American brothers.

He married Dana M. Gadbury in July 1987 at Zion Lutheran Church in Fairbanks, Alaska. They have two children: Andrew, Jr. and Kristin. Andrew is married living in Glennallen, Alaska and Kristin lives in Omaha, Nebraska. Both children are teachers. They now have seven grandchildren. In 2018, they had two nephews and a niece that were orphaned come to live with them and adopted them in 2019. Jacob is thirteen, Thomas is eleven, and Judy is nine.

He graduated from Alaska Bible College with an Associate of Arts degree in Biblical Education in 1991. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Theological Studies from Concordia University in Portland, Oregon in 1993. He received his Masters of Divinity degree from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri in 1997. During Seminary he served a year (vicarage) at Zion Lutheran Church in Denison, Iowa. He also served a summer vicarage at Zion Lutheran in Fairbanks, Alaska.

During his third year of seminary, he was commissioned an officer in the Navy Chaplain Candidate Program. After completing his Masters of Divinity degree in the spring of 1997, he attended chaplain school at the Naval Education Training Center in Newport, Rhode Island. He then served two churches (dual parish) in South Dakota for two years (1997-1999), fulfilling ecclesiastical requirements for service in the church prior to being released by the Lutheran church for active duty with the Navy.

He then served on active duty with the Navy for five years (1999-2004). He served on the USS Camden AOE-2 as command chaplain for two years, serving a tour in the Persian Gulf, where he was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal for service to the sailors of the USS Cole, after their bombing in Aden, Yemen. He served two Navy chapels in the Puget Sound for three years. He was also awarded: the Navy Achievement Medal, Navy Expeditionary Medal, National Defense Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, and War on Terrorism Service Medal. He achieved the rank of Lieutenant.

He resigned from the Navy in 2004 and took a call to serve a triple parish: Grace (Correctionville, IA), Trinity (Anthon, IA), and St. Paul (rural Battle Creek, Iowa), where he served from 2004-2011. There he was recognized by the LCMS for being in the top 3% of congregations in the synod for adult confirmations.

In 2011 he accepted a call to serve St. Paul's in Ireton, where he served from 2011-2015. He was instrumental in a 60% increase in weekly attendance and a \$250,000 building project that was paid off before he left. He also served as Circuit Visitor for the LeMars Circuit of Iowa District West from 2012-2015.

In 2015 he accepted a call to serve Funny River Community Lutheran Church in rural Soldotna, AK (Funny River), where he served until 2020. He also served Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Seldovia for four years. He served three years on the board of directors for the Alaska Mission for Christ working to start churches throughout Alaska.

He accepted a call from Zion Lutheran Church and Open Arms Development Center in Fairbanks, Alaska in September 2020 and began serving in November....