

# From Pastor Marissa Becklin

## Introducing A Member Of Our Online Worshiping Community

### What can you tell us about yourself?

My name is Annika Ring and I am a lifelong Lutheran. I live in Minnesota, am a high school English teacher, and am best friends with Pastor Marissa!

### What do you like about Faith United online, and/or what has kept you connected to us through the pandemic?

What I like most about Faith United online is the accessibility (it's easy to find), and the sense of how you've been intentional about being inclusive for people who are still online. You say good morning to us, post the bulletin, and in the video you show the whole church so it feels like you're a part of it instead of just being on the fringe. I also like that you make all of the other parts of your worship life accessible (like Advent services, studies, etc.).

As an immunocompromised person, I choose to worship online right now for my own safety. Also, because I am extremely busy as a teacher and a coach, to be able to worship in a way that feels like a place to rest in God's presence and feel safe has been extremely beneficial in a stressful world.

### Can you share a story about worshipping with us that sticks with you?

The first Midweek Advent Service that Faith United had came in the midst of an extremely stressful week at work and with COVID-19 in our area. That midweek pause invited me to recenter in the midst of the chaos. It was really meaningful and a good night to remember who's really in control and to remember where all the stress and worries can be cast.

I also love the memory of worshipping with Faith United with my parents on Christmas Eve this year. Christmas was going to look massively different due to a family member testing positive for COVID-19, so having that semblance of normality of "going" to church together was a gift. See below for a picture of my dad pretending to light his candle off of the pew candle at Faith United before singing *Silent Night!*

### Is there anything you'd like to say to Faith United?

I'm appreciative of the way that they've opened their doors through technology to people outside of their community. I think Faith United is doing well as a whole congregation at embracing the challenges that have come and remained faithful in the midst of that. I can see the congregation's heart for community, even when it looks vastly different. The congregation also hasn't shied away from the hard topics, and I love that.

### Can you paint a picture of what worshipping with us is like each Sunday?

Sunday mornings are a very set apart, intentional time of the week for me. I wake up, go to church with all of you, read a devotion, and tend to my plants. It is a pause in the chaos, and worship sets the tone for the day, but then it springs into caring for my heart, my relationship with the Lord, and my relationship with the earth.

### Any last thoughts to share with Faith United?

I'm excited to come join you in person this summer and get to meet you and spend time together!

