

I am a native of Geneva, Ohio [along the shore of Lake Erie, east of Cleveland], the fourth of five children. My family moved to Largo, Florida, on the Gulf Coast in 1966 and I completed high school there in 1977.

I began college at Birmingham-Southern College [in Alabama] for three years and then transferred to Texas Christian University (TCU), in Fort Worth, Texas, where I received my bachelor's degree in 1982. Following my time at TCU, I served in the U.S. Army as an officer, earning a commission through the Reserved Officers Training Corps (ROTC) program at TCU. My first assignment was at the Army Materiel Command in Alexandria, Virginia and then as a company commander at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. While in the Army, I completed airborne training.

Following my years in the Army, I taught in a home for boys in Orangeburg, South Carolina, before attending Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina, where I received a Master's Degree in Education in 1988. I then taught for two years and then moved to the Washington, D.C., area, where I worked in a bank for three years. In 1992, I answered the call to ministry, and in 1997, received a Master of Divinity degree from Wesley Theological Seminary in D.C. In June 1996, I was ordained as a minister in the Nebraska Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. I enjoyed two parish assignments in Pierce and Wayne counties in the northeastern part of the state.

In 1999, I was endorsed by the United Methodist Church to serve in the U.S. Navy as a chaplain. After attending the Chaplain Corps School in Rhode Island, it was off to Iwakuni, Japan, just south of Hiroshima, where I was assigned to work with the Marines. After nearly two years, it was back to the States, where I was assigned to the Naval Hospital at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. After three years serving in a hospital setting, it was time to move on to the final assignment in the Navy, a three year tour with the joint British-American command in Newquay, Cornwall, United Kingdom. While in the United Kingdom, I was active in the Cornwall District of the (English) Methodist Church, preaching on several circuit plans.

While in the Navy, I earned a Doctor of Ministry degree at the Theological School of Drew University, completing the program in 2005. My thesis, "Out of Many, One: The Formation of a Community of Faith in the Sea Services," focused on creating a community of faith in a pluralistic environment.

After I left the Navy in 2007, I was appointed to serve the First UMC in Sidney, Nebraska. A brief leave-of-absence followed in 2009 and then I received an appointment to serve the United Methodist congregations in Iraan and McCamey, Texas. Following 2 ½ years in western Texas I was appointed to an extension ministry with the Veterans Affairs where I completed a year-long residency in the CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) program at the Audie L. Murphy VA Hospital in San Antonio, Texas. During this time I completed the Two-year Academy for Spiritual Formation through the Upper Room. In July 2013 I began an appointment to serve the Stevensville UMC in Stevensville, Montana.

As a hobby, I collect slogan badges and buttons. I've pursued this hobby since high school and have more than 7,600 "buttons" in the collection. I enjoy all kinds of music, but especially love big band music, Drum & Bugle Corps and Gregorian Chants. An avid golfer, I have played the New Course at St. Andrews, Scotland, the "K" Club in Ireland, the Ocean Course at Kiawah Island in South Carolina, and at Pinehurst #2 in North Carolina.

I have been married to Glynis Belinda (Hammitt) Alkula for eighteen years. We share our home with Belinda's mother, Sheila Hammitt, and two grey cats, "Wesley," who adopted us when we lived in McCamey, Texas and "Monty" who joined us here in Montana.