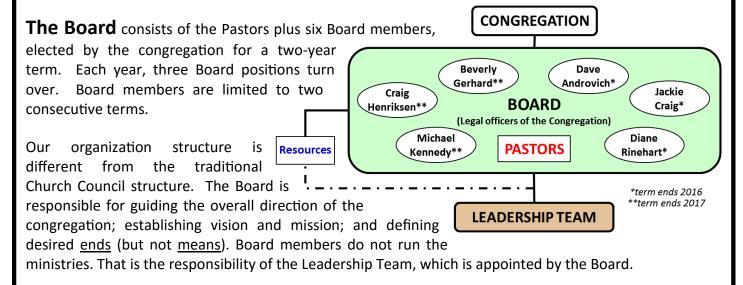


Welcome to a new feature in *The Voice*! Each month we will profile two or three St. John leaders to help you get to know them better, starting with staff, Board members and Leadership Team members. This month we give you an overview of the Board, and will begin profiling individual Board members next month.



The Board meets once per month to review, discuss and resolve a variety of issues facing the Congregation. In the fall they review and approve the annual budget (prepared by the Resources Team) prior to its being submitted to the Congregation for adoption.

Board minutes are available for review in a binder in the church office, and also are posted on the St. John website (www.stjohn-elca.org, click "Member Login", type in the password - 23225Gill - and click "Meeting Minutes.").

Stella Weller, Director of Community Outreach; "Genuine Hospitality" Team Leader Stella was born and raised in Hyderabad, India. She got her business degree and worked for Dell and GE in business management and training. As a young adult she moved to the US looking for better employment opportunities. She first settled in Florida where one of her relatives lived.

One day she was shopping in Macy's where she was approached by a man who introduced himself and asked if she would talk with him. She was initially a bit startled (young ladies in India do not talk to men they don't know) but they had a conversation. He went back to Texas (he had been visiting his grandmother in Florida). When Stella went back to India, he found her online (on the Indian version of facebook) and the conversation continued. Soon after, she got a job in Michigan and he followed her.

The young man's name was (you guessed it!) Craig Weller. They were married and the rest is history! "I think this was destiny. God planned this for me," she says.

(continued on the next page.)

Personality Parade (continued)

Stella and Craig were both raised in the Roman Catholic church. They were accustomed to Sunday being "church day." When they first moved to Michigan, they had no friends or family, no church home, and didn't at first have a car, so it was hard to go church shopping. Stella found Sundays very lonely. Finally she went to Google and looked up all the churches she could walk to. One of them was St. John.

She still remembers the first time they walked in. "I could feel the warmth. People were so loving and caring." She was pregnant at the time, and they felt sad to be so far from all their family at that special time. The second time they came to St. John, they were met with a huge baby shower! "We got so many gifts, I didn't have to buy anything for Isabella in her first year." She found it overwhelming that people would show so much love to a stranger. Craig and Stella joined St. John in 2011. Isabella was born that year and baptized on Christmas Eve.

Stella was hired in 2013 to be St. John's first Director of Community Outreach. Her primary function is to reach out to the community on the part of St. John. She especially loves working with older people ("mostly they just want someone to listen to them") and being our face to the local Indian community. Her "Senior Prom" event at Grand Court was a huge hit, and was featured on Fox2 News. Recent Trunk or Treat and Easter Egg Hunt events have brought lots of families from the neighborhood.

As for how she sees her job: "I love, love what I do. It keeps me going and happy. I don't try to bring people to church. I try to relate them to my experience, and give them the love I've experienced here."

Contact Stella at stellawellerstjohn@gmail.com.

