



**Rev. R. Wayne Morton** was “a little late to the party.” According to his mother, he waited until the hottest day of the year in July of 1953 to be born. He was baptized into the Christian Church at Chews Methodist Church, Glendora, NJ. Again, a little late to the party, he wasn’t confirmed until age 22 - at First Lutheran Church in Sharpsburg (near Pittsburgh), PA.

Pastor Morton graduated from Grove City College, a Presbyterian school north of Pittsburgh, with a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration. While at college, he was hand-picked by the president to receive one of two scholarships to assist the chaplain during Sunday evening’s community worship service and to lead the Campus Christian Union’s Wednesday evening worship. It was at the latter that he met and fell in love with Lutheranism in the form of a beautiful, blond freshman from Allison Park (a Pittsburgh suburb).

Rev. Morton and his wife Beth have been blessed by God with two lovely daughters. Amy is an AP calculus and math teacher at VLHS in Saginaw, MI, where her husband Ben teaches AP biology, science and religion, and coaches girls soccer. Allison is the director of the preschool at Bethel Lutheran Church in Morton, IL, (though she is currently taking a few years off to care for Jackson Benjamin, the first grandchild of the Mortons). Allison’s husband, Ben, serves at OSF Hospital in Peoria as one of a team of neuropsychologists.

Pastor Morton spent his first working years in the corporate world – first as part of the management training program at Standard Oil of Ohio (SOHIO) and then for a decade as a Commercial Lines Underwriter at Travelers Insurance Company (TIC). Under pressure to assume responsibility for the TIC field underwriting office in the Schaumburg, IL, or Walnut Creek, CA, Wayne opted to listen to the call of the Lord instead. He left the corporate world to re-enter academia in 1989 at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN. While he was not responsible for inventing the Internet, he was a pioneer in the contemporary, “why finish in four years when you can finish in five” trend in higher education. Invited to serve as a graduate (or teaching) assistant, he joined a TA class that included Paul McCain (president of CPH), Larry Rast (president of CTS) and Matt Harrison (president of LCMS). Placed into a delayed vicarage at Shepherd of the Mountains Lutheran Church in Pinetop, AZ, the year the rest of his CTS

class graduated, Rev. Morton was ordained there the following year on July 10, 1994. God willing, he will celebrate 22 years of service to God’s people high – 7200 feet! – in Arizona’s White Mountains later this summer.

In his community, Rev. Morton was chosen to be one of the founding members of Pinetop-Lakeside’s 2020 Vision Committee – a collection of real estate, finance, forestry, retail, institutional and HOA professionals charged with identifying the vision the community had for itself more than 20 years down the road (in 2020) and helping them achieve that shared goal. As Committee chairman for more than a decade, he moderated quarterly Town Halls on subjects ranging from Affordable Housing to Urban Redevelopment to Highway Planning to Multi-Modal Trails Systems to acquiring Woodland Lake Park, a 586-acre jewel that sits at the center of the town but is owned by the National Forest Service. As part of his work for 2020, Pastor Morton was the originator of the “Huggable Feet” formulation that simplified the cumbersome USFS analysis, giving homeowners an understandable and convenient method for measuring and ensuring the Firewise safety and Forest Health of their wooded properties.

Elsewhere in the community, he has served as a chaplain at the local hospital, on the Site Council at the local high school, as part of the Election Committee at the local electric cooperative, and perennial member of the Nominating Committee at the local Homeowners’ Association. He was the keynote speaker for the annual Arizona Planning Association conference when it met at nearby Hon Dah on the White Mountain Apache Reservation. He has chaperoned field trips down into the Grand Canyon, been a presenter at Career Fairs at the high school, acted as the official “questioner” for the Regional Academic Decathlon tournament, and authored weekly articles in the religion section of the local paper. For decades he has been one of the Friday Night Faithful at the high school football games, traveling up to 200 miles for “away” games and Cheer & Dance and Speech & Debate tournaments.

In service to the District and Synod, Pastor Morton has been a Circuit Visitor, member (and briefly, chairman) of the Missions Council, Chairman of the Nominations Committee, Chairman of the Elections Committee, (twice) Regional Vice President, and Chairman of the English District Board of Directors. Prior to Seminary, Wayne served various Pennsylvania congregations as youth group leader, Sunday school teacher, elder and call committee chairman. While living and working in State College, PA, Wayne and Beth were led by God to begin a home Bible study - and in time host Sunday evening worship services (officiated by the nearest, but still 30 miles away, LCMS pastor) that in turn grew into Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (Eastern District).