

Ecclesia Clear Lake Elder Profile

Name: Jenny Deitz

1. How long have you been a part of the Ecclesia Clear Lake church family? What initially drew you to the community?

Our family has long since been connected to ECL since approximately 2007 through my husband leading worship; however, we formally began attending in January 2019. I have always appreciated ECL's deep desire to manifest the radical love of Jesus in the community.

2. In what ways do you currently serve in the church and in the community?

I am currently a Connection Group Leader alongside my husband.

I am also a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in the community.

3. Share an overview of your faith story.

Most of my childhood seemed disconnected from regular Sunday participation in Church, with the exceptions of Christmas and Easter, but we also prayed nightly. I can still vividly remember what it was like to have remembered the Lord's Prayer all by myself, because it meant that my older sister and I would be allowed to pray with my parents before bed. Aside from that, it would wait until a series of poor choices in high school before my faith became more personal. I accepted Christ through watching a late night evangelical broadcast. The show said that I needed to call in to tell someone, but I was too afraid, so I just continued accepting Christ nightly in hopes that repetition would overshadow my fears for sharing. One night, I finally got the nerve to call in. The phone rang... and rang and rang and rang. No one ever answered. I believed that to be God's approval for me to move forward with my faith and begin attending church. I found a Methodist church (the only denomination I was familiar with) where I knew a cute boy from my school was attending, and settled there without much consideration for doctrine. After graduating and having another bottoming out moment in college, I became committed to my faith through rededication. Shortly thereafter, I began working at a church in student ministry (soon alongside my husband). After my vocational departure from ministry, my faith continued growing; however, a miscarriage in 2014 led to a significant deconstruction of faith that I have steadily been piecing together ever since. This reconstruction, though incredibly painful at the beginning, has proven to be rich and meaningful and deepened my faith in ways I am eternally grateful for.

4. At ECL we long to have deep roots in the historic Trinitarian Christian faith of the global church. Reflect on your understanding of the Trinity.

For the longest time, my dysfunctional relationship with my father influenced my connection to God as the Father, so the better part of my faith was spent staying closely tethered to God as the Son Jesus, and remaining quietly suspicious of the Holy Spirit. However, it took a great unraveling in the aforementioned deconstruction to lead to deeper understanding of each Person of the Trinity. Since 2014, I began experiencing the triune God as truly unified. I see God as the Father, manifested fully and unequivocally in Jesus, so my picture of God is always informed by my knowledge of Jesus, often clinging to my resolve to know nothing more than Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:2. And my experience of the Spirit is one of freedom rather than fear now, as I find deep connection to the consideration that God is a movement of breath that is happening beyond my vision and very often without my knowledge.

5. At ECL we long for deep bonds of connection in human relationships within our church and in our community. What is the role of authentic and healthy community in church and in faith formation?

I often note that my heart for authentic to connection is what has led me to my profession as a therapist, not the other way around. Since that first “salvation” in my early high school days, I felt a call for true transparency (although it would be some time before I could feel safe enough to live from this place). I have learned over the years that a faith simply cannot grow in secrecy and hiddenness, it must be experienced in the honest connection that can only evolve from the vulnerability inherent to true community. I strive to live and lead in this manner.

6. At ECL we long to be actively engaged in matters of compassion and justice in our community and world. Why is this an important longing? What does a healthy posture of pursuing this longing look like in our context?

I resonate deeply with the call to seek justice and enter into another’s experience of suffering. While I will not pretend to have the answers for a linear pathway to pursuing this longing, I do believe that we must have a place for being learners. I am (and will always be) limited to my experience of this life, but taking the position of a learner allows me to remember that there are other experiences around me that can help me determine how to seek justice alongside my brothers and sisters who are suffering.

Updated: February 15, 2020