



EMILY GUTHRIE

Emily Guthrie is the youngest of five daughters of a chemical engineer and she grew up moving from Connecticut to Texas to Virginia to California, which made her good at meeting new people but also gave her a longing for community. She found that here, where she no longer lives but where she is part of St. Mark's Church and where for nine years she has been executive director and guiding light of the Capitol Hill Group Ministry.

It was twenty years ago that Emily—newly returned from two and a half years in Indonesia teaching English at Gadjah Mada University and starting a library for children in a village north of Djo Djakarta, and time helping one of her sisters with a new baby—joined a program that brought young volunteers to Washington and offered them an opportunity to live in a Christian community across the street from the National Cathedral. Emily's volunteer job was with Sasha Bruce House, here on the Hill. Here she learned the range of issues addressed by urban social service organizations. Having grown up Episcopalian, she also became part-time youth coordinator and then full-time parish coordinator at St. Mark's where she worked, worshiped and performed in plays (memorably portraying Emily in "Our Town" and the little mermaid in "Hans Christian Andersen.") At St. Mark's she discerned a call to the ministry and, encouraged by people there, she left Washington for three years of divinity school at Yale.

Emily came back and, after a few years working at the American Association for the Advancement of Science, she accepted an invitation from St. Mark's parishioner and friend Lynn Kneedler to help plan festivities celebrating the Capitol Hill Group Ministry's thirtieth anniversary. Having been ordained a deacon in the Episcopal Church, she became Lynn's deputy and, later, succeeded her as executive director of the organization—a consortium of local religious groups dedicated to putting their faith into action by helping families and individuals in crisis, especially those facing homelessness.

An ability to connect with and also to respect the many different people she encountered in her work has been among Emily's particular strengths with the Group Ministry, where she made strong connections with the Board of Directors, eleven staff members, local clergy and hundreds of client families and volunteers. "The vulnerable have so much to teach us about ourselves and about what it is to give help and to receive help," she says. "It is a privilege to be invited into their lives and to see their courage." This winter Emily announced that she was leaving the Group Ministry to take some time out and consider what comes next.

Emily has not ruled out pursuing ordination in the Episcopal Church. For now, though, a priority is her new family. A year and a half ago, Emily married lawyer (and guitar and banjo player) Michael Lindner and became step-mother to his children, Noah and Jamie. She looks forward to spending time with them, and with her recently-widowed mother.