

## ***Introduction Letter to Christ the King***

Beloveds in Christ,

I am filled with excitement and gratitude for the opportunity to walk alongside you as your next rector! It has already been such a gift to get to know the CTK community through your wonderful search committee and vestry, and I am so looking forward to connecting with you all over the coming months as we worship and gather together.

I come to Christ the King with four years of ordained ministry experience and ten years working in parishes, largely with youth and children and with a focus on justice and mission work. I have loved facilitating church growth and forming intergenerational communities of dynamic disciples, and I'm thrilled to be able to continue this holy work at Christ the King. I also come well-accompanied: my wife Meg is a postulant for Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church in Connecticut, and is also in her final year of dissertation writing as a PhD student at Fordham University, where she studies theological and social ethics. You can trust that the dinner table conversations in our church-nerd household are hilarious and strange!

We are joining you all at a strange and transitional point in the wider Church and in the ongoing story of our faith. This past year of pandemic ministry has been frustrating, isolating, and heartbreaking – and at the same time, it has opened doors and created pathways in ministry that we may not have even been able to imagine before. It has lifted the veil on structural and systemic inequalities in our country and in our communities, and it has breathed new life into our commitment to justice, love and radical hospitality. I am both hopeful and grateful to be joining you in ministry as we walk into the next phase of what it means to be the Church. It's clear to me that Christ the King is a vibrant, generous, and faith-filled community, and I can't wait to jump in and join you on your journey.

Meg and I, and our cat, Kyrie Eleison, are eager to get settled in Stone Ridge over the summer. We have loved visiting the Hudson Valley/Catskills region over the past few years, and we can barely believe our luck that we will soon get to call it home! We are especially excited for hiking, kayaking, and exploring the local breweries and cideries, and we'd love your recommendations of your favorite local spots (especially for delicious food). My first Sunday will be August 15th, and we'll look forward to seeing you then (in-person or via livestream!)

Peace and Love to you all,

Reverend Marcella

### ***Rev. Marcella Gillis - Bio***

The Reverend Marcella Gillis was ordained to the priesthood in 2017 at The National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. She has worked in parish ministry for over 10 years, serving as the Youth Director at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Capitol Hill (2011-2014), and serving as the Assistant Rector for Youth and Family Ministry at Christ & Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Westport, CT (2015-2021). Rev. Marcella received her M.Div from Yale Divinity School and a Diploma of Anglican Studies from Berkeley Episcopal Seminary in 2017, where she met her wife, Meg, in a course on the New Testament. In seminary, she became especially interested in decolonization and antiracism work, as well as community development and trauma-informed pastoral care.

Growing up in the United Church of Christ in Northern California, Marcella felt the call to be of service to the wider world, which manifested in pursuing an undergraduate degree in international development from American University (Washington, DC) and subsequent service as a Peace Corps volunteer in Nicaragua. These experiences continue to inform Rev. Marcella's ministry, which is rooted in a decolonized vision of Christian education, compassionate service, pragmatic solidarity, and advocacy. She and her wife, Meg, were married in Connecticut in 2018, and live together with their cat, Kyrie Eleison.