

Rev. Kristen L. Hanna

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Professional Summary

Strategic communications and program leader with 8+ years integrating communications planning, stakeholder engagement, editorial strategy, and project coordination within United Methodist ministry, complemented by 10+ years of denominational and cross-functional leadership. Ordained UMC elder with deep knowledge of UMC polity, governance, and denominational infrastructure. Experienced in translating organizational priorities and stakeholder needs into audience-focused messaging, multi-channel communications plans, campaigns, and engagement strategies, with strengths in writing and editing, analytics-informed decision-making, and collaborative project execution.

Core Competencies

- Strategic Communications Planning
- Partner & Stakeholder Relationship Management
- Project & Event Management
- UMC Polity, Governance & Denominational Infrastructure
- Writing, Editing & Messaging Development
- Campaign & Content Coordination
- Editorial Strategy & Communications Calendaring
- Audience Engagement & Analytics
- Project & Timeline Management
- Cross-Organization Collaboration
- Digital & Multi-Channel Communications
- Facilitation & Public Speaking

Professional experience

Christ United Methodist Church, Chapel Hill, NC

Associate Pastor of Worship & Discipleship | *2018–Present*

Interim Communications Lead | *Nov 2019–May 2020; Aug–Oct 2025; May–Jul 2026*

- Serve as a primary relationship partner across clergy, staff, lay leaders, and ministry teams, translating organizational priorities and stakeholder needs into communications, programming, and engagement strategies.
- Supervise and collaborate with communications staff member through weekly editorial and calendar reviews, triaging requests from approximately fifteen ministry areas and determining message priority, timing, audience, and appropriate communications channels.
- Plan multi-channel communications for major church-wide initiatives and events, coordinating digital and print communications, signage, direct mail, worship slides, advance promotion, and post-event follow-up.

- Use Mailchimp engagement data and audience response to evaluate communications effectiveness, contributing to a newsletter redesign and decisions regarding recurring content such as video pastoral updates.
- Lead communications and program strategy for recurring and major initiatives, including annual stewardship and seasonal campaigns as well as a year-long 30th Anniversary campaign spanning worship, service, and community events.
- Developed leadership pipelines and training curricula that contributed to a 30% increase in weekly discipleship participation; evaluate program effectiveness through attendance, lay engagement, staff-to-volunteer involvement, and post-event assessment.
- Led the missions committee: managed volunteer recruitment and onboarding, and scheduled and evaluated recurring service projects (school-supply drive, Angel Tree, TABLE meal-packing, Habitat for Humanity builds) in coordination with administrative staff.
- Directed worship planning and production — liturgy design, AV oversight, and volunteer scheduling — for weekly and seasonal services.

SEJ Quadrennial Clergywomen's Conference "Uncharted"

Design Team Member | 2019

- Co-designed and implemented a multi-day national leadership convening for clergywomen, including worship, breakout workshops, vendors, and hotel/logistics coordination.
- Identified, recruited, and briefed breakout session leaders to ensure workshop content aligned with participants' leadership development needs.

North Carolina Preaching Festival

Design Team Member, Worship Coordinator | 2014-2017

- Planned and facilitated 8 worship services across a 2-day, multi-track conference; helped identify annual themes from community needs and recruited speakers and breakout leaders accordingly.
- Coordinated musicians, AV volunteers, and day-of logistics for a multi-hundred-person convening.

North Carolina Annual Conference, UMC

Committee Member | 2024–Present

- Meets with certified Lay Ministers & Lay Speakers, providing feedback, points for reflection, and offering support as they carry out the work of the church in their communities
 - Serving as a mentor/touch-point when needed
- Interview and evaluate candidates for ordained ministry, assessing readiness and generating discernment questions in real time during group interviews.

Candidacy Mentor | 2024–Present

- Co-lead bi-monthly meetings with a small cohort of lay people exploring a variety of callings, both lay and clergy
- Offer support, feedback, and guidance along the journey

Music Ministry Experience

Associate Pastor of Music and Worship

Lake Highlands UMC, Dallas | *August 2017 - May 2018*

St. Mark's UMC, Raleigh | *January 2013 - August 2017*

- Directed and managed multiple ensembles and paid/volunteer staff across age groups
- Recruited and contracted seasonal chamber orchestras
- Recruited, trained, and scheduled cross-functional volunteer teams (AV, ushers, communion, acolytes)
- Adapted programming to fit varying group sizes and skill levels.

Theological Writing

Monthly Contributor; *Thinking Through Christianity* (2014–2021)

Wrote monthly reflections on theology, discipleship, church culture, doctrine, and public witness

Contributor; NC Conference, COSROW “Encouragements” Newsletter

(July, November 2024)

Ordination & Conference Membership

- Elder in Full Connection, NCCUMC (2023)
- Provisional Clergy (Deacon), NCCUMC (2016)

Education

Southern Methodist University, Perkins School of Theology

Master of Sacred Music, Magna Cum Laude — 2012

Southern Methodist University, Meadows School of the Arts

Bachelor of Music, Voice Performance — 2009

Additional Theological Coursework

Duke University Divinity School: Preaching the Sacraments; Innovative Leadership in the Local Church

Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary: Christian Education: Child Advocacy; Introduction to Christian Ethics

Technology & Tools

- Proficient: Zoom, Google Workspace, Microsoft Office/Teams, Canva, ProPresenter, Windows and Mac OS
- Experienced: OBS, ManyCam, Adobe Creative Suite, Procreate, ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Perplexity