



Rev. Dr. Kevin Downer grew up in Pomfret, graduated from Putnam High, went to college in Worcester and earned an MBA from UCONN. He was baptized and confirmed in the United Church of Christ, volunteered as a young adult at Silver Lake Conference Center, and has been a member of several UCC churches in Connecticut.

A second career pastor, he spent more than 10 years as a consultant helping businesses use emerging technologies to streamline processes and enhance customer, employee and stake holder relationships.

Although his formal theological education includes a Masters in Divinity from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and a Doctorate in Ministry from Chicago Theological Seminary, he says, “As a once-closeted gay man, much of my understanding of who God is and how God works comes from my questions, challenges and struggle to find my way into God’s story.”

He sees his life journey as an ongoing call to an urgent ministry of transformation. He teaches, preaches, pastors, and ministers in spiritually-grounded, practical ways that invite others to welcome wonder, hear and share stories, and explore how we might bring healing and hope to our relationships, community and God’s world.

Ordained in 2006 by the Metropolitan Community Churches, he returned to his spiritual roots in the UCC receiving full standing through Privilege of Call in 2018. He planted a diverse, emerging church in Chicago and served congregations in Minneapolis, Los Angeles, San Antonio, Toronto, and Worcester. He is currently a member of Worcester’s Hadwen Park UCC where he served on the steering committee and annual gala planning team for the LGBT Asylum Task Force.

He is joined on this journey by his spouse Toby Bishop. In August they celebrated 20 years together and the 14th anniversary of their marriage. Toby and Kevin currently live in Auburn with their two cats, Kate and Pippa. His inner life and relationships are nurtured and renewed through a variety of practices including silent reflection, gardening, baking, running, exploring Scriptures, preparing worship, and helping individuals and communities connect their stories to God’s ever-unfolding story.

Throughout his ministry he has worked with interfaith, ecumenical and social-justice organizations. He has received awards for his innovative ministry, and was recognized by the U.S. House of Representatives for transformational ministry with Founders MCC in Los Angeles – the first congregation

to have a primary focus affirming the lives of LGBTQ people. He has appeared in several documentaries and an episode of Vanderpump Rules.

Leaders at various congregations where he has served share:

“Pastor Kevin is kind, friendly, approachable, and spiritual. He knows God: he has helped us to better understand ourselves and God in our lives... He helped us clarify who we are as a church. This was a huge task he guided us through with constant encouragement and candor. His Sunday sermons have been profound, always encouraging, always exploring, always with a powerful message within the spoken word...” - Dennis Christo, moderator at Greendale People’s Church in Worcester

“Rev Kevin brought with him a sense of grace and peace that I had not felt as deeply in my soul as he made me feel. Many of his experiences were uplifting and significant as he accomplished the task of reconciliation. His sermon series were creative and individual and spoke to each different group within the church. He reached out and built bridges with our Muslim brothers and sisters when they were being exiled and shamed.” - Jenni Nichols, board member Founders MCC Los Angeles

“My experience with Kevin continues to be one of my favorite spiritual experiences. He is practical, lovely, funny, genius, wise, and modest. I recommend him highly.” - Rose Ahmann, former board member All God’s Children MCC Minneapolis

If you are wondering, “How should we address him?” He says, “Use whatever feels most comfortable for you, e.g., Rev. Downer, Pastor Kevin, Rev. Kev, or Kevin I am a child of Living God and God’s call and claim does not change no matter how people address me.”

