

# Meet M.Div Student: Mark Glazener



Mark Glazener with members of his congregation.



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## My Journey to Wartburg

My journey to Wartburg began in April 2021, during a period of personal discernment following my wife's passing. My pastor in Florida encouraged me to consider exploring new paths. After discussions about my calling and potential seminary options, my pastor, Steve Winsor, a Wartburg alumnus, recommended Wartburg based on my desire for community involvement. After conversations with the admissions counselor, I felt Wartburg was the perfect fit, and I have been pleased with my decision ever since.

## Internship at St. Andrew Lutheran Church

I am currently interning at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Charlestown, Rhode Island, within the New England Synod. My duties include assisting in worship services, preaching, teaching confirmation classes and adult Bible study, planning worship and events, and serving on the stewardship team and budget committee. A significant project I'm involved in is building an outdoor sanctuary that includes a prayer labyrinth, organic garden, and memorial garden. This project is community-focused, and I have been actively participating in its various phases, from fundraising to planning and construction.

## Embracing Permeable Edges

The St. Andrew's community believes strongly in creating a church environment that extends beyond the traditional boundaries of membership and Sunday services. It emphasizes inclusivity and community engagement through various activities and services that allow people to connect and feel part of the church community without needing to be formal members. For example, participating in yoga classes, food pantry services, or community dinners makes individuals part of the community. This approach seeks to reach out to more people, fostering connections and support networks within the community.

## Outdoor Sanctuary Project

The outdoor sanctuary project is designed as a community initiative, not just for St. Andrew's. It aims to create a permanent worship space that can also serve multiple community functions such as funerals and weddings. The project includes building an organic garden, a prayer labyrinth, and a memorial garden. Fundraising and community involvement have been key components, and we have exceeded our financial goals. We are now in the clearing phase, preparing the site for construction, which will begin in early fall. The project has garnered significant support and involvement from local businesses and community members, highlighting our commitment to serving the broader community.

## How Has Wartburg Prepared You for This Role?

Professor Samantha Gilmore and the preaching class really helped prepare me. Before I delivered my first sermon here on internship, the pastor took me aside and reassured me that this is a very forgiving congregation, that they show a lot of grace—all those things you would tell an intern on their very first sermon to reassure them. I had a normal amount of nerves leading up to it, but people told me afterward that I seemed so confident it seemed like I had been preaching for years. And I think having that preaching class and preparation was a direct influence to allow me to feel confident and step right into that role.