**Shepard A. Parsons**

Shepard received his M.Div. from YDS in 1984, was ordained by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and has been serving United Churches of Christ congregations since 1985. He was privileged to walk with three faith communities as they declared themselves to be open and affirming congregations.

Shepard is originally from Orlando, Florida and graduated from Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina. He is married to Karen Klein, a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, has three children, Iris 11, Eli 8 and Charis 18, and lives in Westville Section of New Haven. He is an avid artist and exercise enthusiast.

His prior pastoral experience includes serving at South Congregational Church in Waterbury, Center Church on the Green in New Haven, First Church of Christ, Devon, and at the Shelton Congregational Church in Shelton.  He has also served as Chairman of the New Haven Board of Ethics, as a delegate to the General Synod of the United Church of Christ, on the Committees on Ministry of the Naugatuck Valley Association and the New Haven Association, and with the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Contrary to thoughts of ministerial stereotypes, Rev. Parsons tells of his days fresh out of college, working on a four-thousand acre cattle ranch in Florida with his father. “I rode horseback,” he says, “with a lasso and a pistol for protection from snakes. We moved cattle, herded them in and out of pasture lands, roped and branded calves, and took the cattle to market.”

Shepard has supervised over 20 YDS students and was a Practicum teacher in the late '80's and 90's and for the last decade.