Avis R. Anderson

Ordained 2003

Served Zion Lutheran Church 1997-2003 as Lay Associate under Pastor Paul Everett; Associate Pastor from 2003-2005; Senior Pastor (called) 2005-2014; retired from call 2014, then 5 years during interim work (Baker, Savage, Glendive) and pulpit supply in Eastern Montana.

One of God’s many grace gifts was my call to ministry as a second career through the TEEM program (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) in the ELCA. I had always had a yen to serve in rural ministry, attending training through the Western North Dakota GIFTS program for a number of years. When Montana joined the ranks of providing lay pastoral programs I was grandfathered in. While serving as Lay Associate at Zion (longest internship on record), Bishop Ramseth asked if I was interested in TEEM. God provided all the open doors and opportunities which led to ordination.

Serving my home congregation (member of Zion since 1954 when I moved to Glendive with my parents) was a unique experience, but one in which God’s grace was ever present. The Ladies’ Aid cluster gatherings, pastors’ cluster meetings, church suppers, reaching out to the community with a variety of assistance programs, and confirmation, youth gatherings, Bible studies and the comradeship of working with a beloved community of believers was God’s gift to me. I was pastor when the congregation celebrated 100 years of ministry and we enjoyed a year long celebration. To baptize, marry, bury and provide pastoral care to people who had mentored me in my faith life was like repaying a gift I had been given. I walked with many of them to their eternal home. Because Deer Creek Lutheran Church at Lindsay, Montana, was joined to Zion, I had the blessing of walking with those few members as they closed their doors. It was an emotional memory I will always carry with me both for the faith of the remaining members and the wonderful heritage the congregation had inspired over 75 years. And once again I was the one who was blessed.

Since retirement, providing pulpit supply to the local Methodist and UCC churches as well as serving the Southeast Synod when needed has been an opportunity in getting to know congregations throughout the area.

I continue to fill in where and when I am needed. Life is good because God is good all the time.