Patricia Callaghan
Served in the Lutheran Church of Sunburst, 1998-2000 as residential intern and 2000-2013 as ordained and called pastor. Retired, 2013. Served as interim pastor in St. John’s Lutheran Church, Great Falls 2013-2014; United Trinity Lutheran Parish in Baker, Plevna, Ekalaka, 4 mo in 2017; Hope Lutheran Church, Powell, WY, 5 mo in 2018; Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Butte,11 mo in 2018-2019.

I came late to ordained ministry, having spent 20 years with a rural community action agency as a program director then as agency director. Our work was with communities, with low-income people, with the elderly, with working people, and with youth. I had no plan to leave that satisfying and engrossing work, so I was surprised to be called to a ministry of word and sacrament. But the years of seminary study were such a gift and my years of community social work and working with councils and advisory boards were of value in doing congregational ministry. Nothing is wasted.
        Although I had never taught, I found working with confirmation students to be one of the lasting satisfactions and blessings of ministry.
        I was blessed to have 13 years of ordained ministry and a few interim assignments before I retired for good. I learned more than I taught, was nurtured as I ministered to others, was fed and strengthened by the Word of God as I shared it in pulpit, parish life, and teaching.
        Reflecting on women in ministry, though I was the first woman pastor in Sunburst, I was welcomed. One parishioner had objected to a woman pastor before I came but his objections quickly faded as he and his wife became good friends as well as parishioners. Looking back, I experienced a little more resistance to becoming the first woman on the church council in a pre-seminary congregation than I experienced as a pastor I am grateful to those earlier women clergy who overcame resistance and strengthened the ELCA.