My name is Carol Seilhymer. Since August 2016, I have served a two-point parish, First Lutheran Church in Plains and Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Thompson Falls. At times, it can be a struggle to juggle two churches' needs with very distinct personalities. One congregation is more formal, while the other is laid back. Both congregations have similar goals and values, such as reaching out to those in need in the community, Christian education, and sharing their love of Christ. I appreciate their willingness to try new music, have a drive-by parade for a homebound member, and explore different worship settings and lectionaries.

One of the joys in ministries has been to have the church leadership find ways to foster the churches' relationships. It began with a food drive challenge to see who could collect the most food. The next year was a toilet paper drive. They have discovered it as a way to have fun while helping their local communities. Another joy is the way they have come to embrace God's Work. Our Hands. each year. Already they are coming up with ideas for 2021.

Over the last two years, I have realized that I am not merely the pastor for the two churches but also in the communities. Our Methodist brothers and sisters look to me for guidance whenever they are in transition. In my time, I have conducted more funerals for non-members than parishioners. Pastoral care happens at the local coffee shop, community events, volunteer hospital chaplains, and whenever I am out in the communities.

It has not always been easy to be a woman in ministry. Some churches will not accept a female pastor. I am judged differently than my male counterparts. For those times, I need encouragement; I recall a mother who thanked me. She thanked me for my leadership and being a role model for her daughter.