Jessica,

Here is my reflection as we celebrate 50 years of women’s ordination. It may not me what you are looking for – and that’s ok – it is just what came to me.   
 Thank you again for your discernment, guidance, and support. God called and God put us in the right place in God’s timing so it could become a reality:

Fifty years ago, while in Bible School, I realized I wanted to be a Pastor. Of course, my professors told me women (I think he said “girls”) were not allowed to be pastors, it wasn’t Biblical. We could be missionaries, Sunday School teachers, or Pastor’s wives.

I was caught in the not something women do conundrum. My story is not so much about my experience of ministry, but that I was able to minister.

Attending church was not a part of my life or interest until I was a senior in high school. I read the Bible, I’d formed my own “theology,” I believed what I’d read in the Bible and when I started to attend church - I was all in. I became a leader in our youth group. I attended conferences, was a camp counselor, went on an overseas mission. My dad eventually said he could no longer afford to have me be Christian.

After college I went into the work force, remained very active in my church, and never lost the desire to be a Pastor. Even though I saw more and more female pastors, I gave up on the possibility.

I claimed *Here I Am, Lord* as my theme song. I heard a calling in the night to preach, teach, encourage, and love within a church, a community, the world God so loves. The call never left I continued to be involved with the church I attended, seeking education, directions, and ways to serve.

After a long and winding journey, I became a Lutheran. My desire to be a pastor came to fruition. Thanks to Bishop Jessica Crist I was accepted into the LPA program (after having missed the first retreat). I was looking into Seminary, when my husband died unexpectedly. My desire became existing and I took on four different jobs.

Into this darkness, I was asked to supply at St. James in Columbus while they were in the call process. I continued with my, now, five jobs for six months when I was asked to apply for the position of Pastor. After being hired, - again thanks to Bishop Crist - I was accepted into the TEEM program. The long journey did lead to a call, eventually.

Here I am, Lord, I will hold your people in my hand.

Pastor Tonia Fisher

St. James Columbus Montana

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