I currently serve as solo pastor at Grace Lutheran Church in Cambridge, WI.  After several years serving as our synod's DEM, Erik got the itch to get back into the parish, so he serves at a congregation 18 miles away and is very happy there.  I was only in Montana for 3 1/2 years, but here are some reflections on that time.

I began my ordained ministry in Montana, a Midwestern girl suddenly surrounded by Big Sky.  I was the first female pastor in the parish I served, and I remember being asked, "What should we call you? Sister?"  I said, "Pastor Jennifer will be just fine."  Since I was co-pastoring with my husband, I think people were more open to having a female pastor, but I don't think their expectations for me were very high.  But throughout my ministry, I've enjoyed surprising people and surpassing their expectations, showing them that the Spirit is active and passionate about working through men AND women.  During that first call, I delighted in seeing women in our parish realize that they had a pastor who they could relate to in a way they'd never related to a pastor before.  Many times I heard this, "You know, I didn't want a female pastor, but I really like you."  It was a joy seeing hearts open and minds change as we served God there together.

Peace,

Jennifer Jelinek