September 29, 2020

Pella Lutheran Church, Sidney

1995-2002

Atonement Lutheran Church, Billings 2002-2007

St. John’s Lutheran Ministries, Billings 2007-2012

Building Faith Ministries, Laurel & Joliet 2012-2016

Medical Leave of Call

2016-2019

Retirement November 1, 2019

Being called to serve in the Ministry of Word and Sacrament to the Montana Synod in 1995 I was filled with awe and excitement.

Mark, my spouse, and I were considered a Clergy Couple. We chose to serve together in the same congregation. We had experience with this and saw it as a blessing to us and a benefit to congregations. As a team we strove to: build consensus in council decisions, divide the areas of pastoral responsibilities according to our gifts, sharing equally in the worship duties and when we had times of disagreement we would agree to disagree. This was a style that worked well and albeit different, worked well for the congregations we served together. I often described it as a couple who runs the family ranch or farm together. There is work to be done and together it gets done.

In the first years I learned that what was taught at seminary was going to be my foundation but not instructive to the regular rhythms of a congregation or members lives. I think I can best sum up my ministry over all as a ministry of interruptions. The messiness of a congregation and more so of the people you are called to serve with, is a process that can rarely be scheduled in your calendar. Ministry happens everywhere, in the grocery store, basketball game, at the arena, and so on. Ministry with people, is right where they are, physically, emotionally and spiritually. It was a ministry of listening and sharing, of planning and replanning, of celebrating and mourning. What I did in my ministry in the Montana Synod was to offer my gifts, talents and passion for the Gospel of Jesus to, with and for the people of Jesus.

When I was recovering from my medical mental illness, I got a job as a waitress in a small café. One day a regular customer, said to me “you must really love your job?” I turned and looked at this person, with sweat running down my face, and said “no, not really.” They continued, “you seem to really love everyone who comes in here.” I said, “because I know how loved I am.”

In all the places I’ve served God’s people with their expectations, criticisms, and affirmations, I have always stood in the reality of God’s love for me through Jesus the Christ. Now that I’m retired from congregational ministry, God’s love still keeps me serving, everyday!