I believe God begins preparing us for ministry long before we realize what God is doing. As a child I never had a female ordained pastor. What I had were two very strong female leaders in the church. Both my Grandma Marion and her daughter, my mom, Shirley were leaders in our church. They were volunteer Sunday school and bible school superintendents as well as active in Ladies Aid. Due to their leadership, as a child, it never occurred to me that I couldn’t be a leader in the church.

Fast forward to adulthood and personal study of scripture. It was during this time I read in First Corinthians chapter 14 that women were to remain silent in church. Then I read First Timothy chapter 3 and really understood why I would never qualify as a pastor. Therefore, it was extremely strange the day I was having a rather stern talk to God about the need for pastors in small rural areas. My home church, American Lutheran church of Winifred, Montana was struggling to find a pastor that desired to minister in a small, rural congregation. I explained to God that “those people need to hear God’s Word as much as anyone.” In that moment I clearly heard a voice say “then go do it.” As, a busy, single mother of three, I simply replied “I think I am a little busy.” Notice I didn’t even think about the scriptures that are often used to keep women silent; I simply reflected the state my life was in at the time.

More years passed and I found myself working in a suburban ELCA congregation in Seattle. First Lutheran of Richmond Beach, had a lead pastor, an associate, and a visiting pastor. Two of them were female as was the Youth Director. Not only was I the administrative assistant I was also a member of this congregation. It was these people who solidified my call to ministry and told me “I was in the wrong position for the church.” This time I didn’t feel “too busy” and started the process towards ordained ministry.

I was ordained at my home congregation in Winifred December 15, 2007 by Bishop Jessica Crist. The two pastors who encouraged me in ministry were there to present me and preach. I was called to Prince of Peace Lutheran in Missoula, Mt. In the spring of 2011 I was called as the first female pastor to Trinity Lutheran in Cody, Wyoming. The people of Trinity and I shared in ministry. I remember hearing one member say “Pastor Audrey is our first woman pastor and I will not hesitate calling another female.” I am now in my third call at Pella Lutheran Church, Sidney, MT.

It took me a while to answer God’s call to ministry. In the mean time I tested out a variety of vocations. What I have learned is finding the vocation God created you to fill gives you a since of calm. Yes, I make mistakes, and I am not perfect; but living into the call seems to be a natural fit.