

From Jenn Warnock, Lay Minister

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up, do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” Isaiah 43: 18-19

Happy Summer, Hope church family! I am thankful for this season of sunshine, growth, and warmth! I wanted to let everyone know how much I have enjoyed ministry with you in the last six months, and take some time to introduce a little more about the person in the pulpit. I am Jennifer Warnock, and I live in Madison, Minnesota with my husband Will and our three awesome dogs! Together we have four children and one beautiful granddaughter. Will and I are both children of the parsonage, my dad was a Baptist pastor for fifty years, and Will's parents were both Methodist pastors. Will has also been a Methodist pastor for thirty years, as well as a social worker, ministering to churches in Georgia, Alabama, and Minnesota. My educational background is in psychology, Christianity and family counseling. I began my career after college as a part-time Minister to Children and Youth in a church, taught church preschool, and eventually settled into county social work with children and families. I am currently in my twenty-seventh year in social work, and work at Big Stone County Family Services in Ortonville, MN. In 2012, Will and I bought the former Ebenezer Methodist Church building in Madison. We live in it, we love it, and we named it Sanctuary! So, I am literally at home in the church in more ways than one.

Our home church is Faith Lutheran in Madison, where I have been very involved in the adult choir, praise band, global missions committee, and the church fair stand. About a year ago, several of us at Faith became very concerned about some of our rural Lac Qui Parle churches who were facing difficulties because of loss of membership and financial resources, and lack of clergy resources. With the blessing of our Pastor Roy Noel, we were able to enter into a new lay ministry program through the Southwest ELCA to become Synod Authorized Ministers (SAM). Through this program, we are enrolled in a one-year intensive lay ministry school called Faith Lead through Luther Seminary, and meet monthly at the synod office for training with Bishop Dee Peterson. We are also involved in serving in local churches. Because of the synod's authorization and the supervision of the bishop, we are able to provide the sacraments to the churches we serve: for example, I have been able to serve communion, baptize sweet baby Mallory DeVos, and officiate at the funerals of Fred Gottskalkson and Carolyn Janie Boyes in the past six months. This program has already been modeled and proven to be very successful in Northwest Minnesota rural churches. When we began this program, ten of us were at the first meeting and last meeting I was among thirty other lay ministers serving churches in rural Southwest Minnesota. Every time we meet, Bishop Dee says, “The Lord is doing a new thing”! Personally, after finishing the Faith Lead School in September, I will be entering Luther Seminary's MA in Christian Ministry program and seek ordination in word and sacrament.

I am delighted to announce that three of our at-risk Lac Qui Parle churches are being served by my fellow ministers from this program, as well as Bethany-Elim in Ivanhoe. Somehow, in the will and way of the Lord, I ended up in Minneota! When the church contacted me in late November about pulpit supply, I agreed without hesitation. I remember making the statement, "I can be with you as long as you need me", and six months later, I am still here! With you, I pray for the pastor God has in store for you, and am praying for a wise, kind and compassionate Shepherd to lead you in the manner of Jesus. But until that person arrives, I say again, I can be with you as long as you need me!

In Christ Alone,

Jenn