



"I am Pastor Tim Christensen, and by the request of both Bishop Wickstrom of the Alaska Synod of the ELCA and your congregation's leadership team, I am here to serve as your Intentional Interim Pastor while you and your Call Committee search for your new minister. But rather than tell you about me, I want to tell you about you, about what I have learned about you in my first 6 days here..." – October 3, 2019

That's how I began my first worship service with you, by reflecting back to you the gracious hospitality and welcome that I received as I came into this community. Your parsonage has become my home-away-from-home over this last month, but to walk in on my first day and find sheets on the bed, towels in the linen closet, art on the walls, food stocked in the pantry and freezer, whole bean coffee, fresh-baked muffins, homemade jams, Alaskan raw honey, baked pasta shells with Italian sausage and marinara sauce, pots and pans in the cupboards, local beer in the fridge, new furniture in the living room, beautiful wood-laminate flooring, new windows, a new bathroom mirror, the grounds all mowed and raked, and the garden cared for – it was almost too much. As I said before our first Sunday worship together, "If you folks will go to this much trouble for a complete stranger, then I also know you're ready for your new pastor. This is a lively, generous, faithful, and energized congregation that is clearly ready for What Comes Next."

Many of you have been doing the work and caring for the well-being of this congregation – its ministry, its members, and its neighbors – and now I'm here to help with this last part of that work that leads to extending a Letter of Call. I don't come to do the work for you, but to come alongside and work with you, helping to shepherd the process that will lead to the arrival of your new pastor, but also to take part in all aspects of the life of faith at Fairbanks Lutheran Church. I've already met many of the folks who make up your leadership teams, as well as getting a chance to meet so many of you in worship. If you've been away for a while, I ask you to come back to worship and be reenergized by the spirit of this community of faith as well as taking your own opportunity to step back into the life of your church so that you can be a part of this growing in faith.

I'll close with three verses from a hymn that means a great deal to me in this work, "Will You Let Me Be Your Servant" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship #659):

Will you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you?

Pray that I may have the faith to let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey, we are trav'lers on the road;

We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you in the night-time of your fear;

I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.

We are in this together, we walk by faith, we trust in the Lord's providing, we believe the Spirit is guiding us, and so we have nothing to fear as we continue this journey to What Comes Next.

Serving together with you in Christ's name,

✝ Pastor Tim