

An Honor to Serve

Father Steve Reed
Christ Lutheran Church, Fairbanks

Episcopal priest, Father Steve Reed, is completing his interim ministry with the people of Christ Lutheran Church-Fairbanks. He wrote the following in their January newsletter.

People have many expectations of their pastor. People expect that their pastor will make hospital, home, or work visits. People also expect their pastor to be available in the office or otherwise accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in the event of a crisis and/or emergency. People also expect a well-ordered service, meaningful sermons and effective ministries.

Now let's unpack some of those expectations and assumptions to find a path forward.

Hospital visits assume that the pastor knows that you or your loved one is in the hospital. For the pastor to visit you in the hospital, the pastor must know that you are in the hospital and which hospital. I have gone to FMH to visit a person only to learn that the person is in Anchorage or Seattle. It happens. The hospital does NOT call pastors (or churches) except in an extreme emergency at the request of family.

Home or work visits, I have always operated under the assumption that if a person wants me to visit their home or work that some sort of an invitation will be given. I do not simply show up or call to invite myself. An invitation is better than a cycle of expectation, assumption, and frustration.

The pastor is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The pastor also has days off. Many pastors prefer not to be called or texted about work matters on their day off.

People expect and assume that the **worship services** will follow ELCA guidelines in coordination with the Worship and Music Committee. People also expect that the sermons will be meaningful. Give feedback to your pastor on the sermon – more than a polite handshake and thank you. The confirmation students write brief notes on the Children's Sermon and/or the Adult sermon, consider doing the same.

People expect that the pastor will lead children, youth, young adult/young families, and Sage's ministry. There is only one pastor for the many people and ministries at Christ Lutheran Church. Your help and participation are necessary for any and all ministries to thrive.

Once Pastor Dustin begins, I will leave. That is the rule and the reason is simple, to make clear who the pastor is and who the pastor is not. It has been an honor to serve and we have certainly been through quite a lot since I began here in August of 2017. Thank you.