

As these winds of Spirit-led change continue to blow strong among us, I have an announcement: it is with both sadness and hope I have accepted a full-time job to continue the good work God is doing at Incarnation Lutheran in Shoreview, MN (4 minutes from our home). My last Sunday will be May 23, with my last day in the office Monday, May 24. This newly designed Formation Leader for Teens & Families position, which will include a modern worship and band component, will also allow me to develop and implement a team-based approach to how teens and their families holistically follow the call of Jesus and grow in faith in this new era.

Our congregation was founded in 1888. Many forces have shaped us in that time. Powerful stuff like actual fire or wandering for years without a lead pastor, and ultimately something a little harder to perceive... the Holy Spirit. We share these stories and see the promise of God through the generations—how God is faithful, never left us alone, and always provided the leaders to help us find our way together.

In 50 or 100 years, when those future people of Faith re-tell the story of how we responded to the disruption of the past 13 months, they will be connecting with our story as a source of inspiration and encouragement. They will see how God's Spirit led us into new and overflowing life as we experienced healing and grace during pandemic. Through it all, we will come to know God never once left us on our own. God raised up leaders to help us navigate these difficult and transformative times together.

Then, as now, our story is filled with resilience, daring faith and a growing love for our neighbor in a shifting world.

As I open this new chapter of my life, I am filled with gratitude for our time together. We've covered a lot of ground together. The way this team has responded to the needs of the past year has been nothing short of amazing! I have been blessed these past 2 years to work with such an awesome crew of musicians and other leaders to plan and participate in some of the most moving worship services I have ever experienced. While serving with this community, I have stood alongside a passionate, dedicated, talented and caring staff. Pastor John has been a wonderful mentor and friend, as has Deacon Nina. Linda Burk and Alan Ball (what came to be known as the 3Bs) are so collaborative, so creative. I am so thankful for their partnership in the ministry we shared. These are just some of the amazing relationships I bring with me as I take yet another step in shared ministry with God's church.

These types of changes always offer a mixed bag of excitement, sadness and a bit of anxiety during what might feel like a vulnerable time. If you feel it, that's OK. I am feeling all the feels right now because it's difficult to leave such a healthy and vibrant place. Yet, I know you'll be taken care of because God's Spirit is pulling us along the way of love as we respond to the needs of our congregation and community, slowly emerging from the shadows of this pandemic.

One of the songs we've sung together at least a dozen times speaks of God's love as "*constant through the trial and the change*" (*One Thing Remains*). I take comfort in this truth and share it in the hope it might offer you the same sense of God's presence. We still have some time together, so let's spend it singing and serving and celebrating how God is carrying us into a future full of hope and promise, even as we don't quite know what this future will look like.

What will not change, what remains, FaithFL, is our deep connection, my gratitude for your kindness and support and my enthusiastic embrace of who God is calling you to be as you continue to be *led by the Spirit to show God's grace*.

I love you, Faith. I'll be seeing you!

—Nate