

My name is Pastor Kate and I am honored and blessed to be your Curate.

But what is a curate anyways? Not a carrot or a Keurig, a curate. Because a curacy is kind of a particular thing in the life of a church and in the life of a priest and, who knows, the word might come up on a future episode of episcopal jeopardy. A curacy is typically a two-year position for a priest recently out of seminary and it's offered by a teaching congregation. A congregation like this one that is well known for taking newer priest and, through the mentorship of a supervising priest and a community that is dedicated learning and growing in their relationship with God and each other, helping that priest become more fully the minister God created them to be. And trusting that, in doing that work of forming a new priest, the congregation would also become more fully who God created them to be.

I knew I wanted to serve church of the Good Shepherd the very first time I spoke to Pastor Alanna on the phone. I told her I was looking for a priest, especially (Alleluia!) a priest who was a woman and in charge of a parish who would serve as a mentor to me and help me claim my own voice as a leader and she told me she was looking for a partner in ministry and was so excited to mentor a new clergy person with the congregation that had shaped and mentored her. She told me this would be a somewhat non-traditional curacy. Pastor Odie was retiring, the congregation was in transition, she was stepping into the role of priest in charge role for the first time, but this was a community who loved each other and loved their clergy and loved to laugh. Was I in? You better believe it.

Alanna, as a pastor, as mentor, you have gone above and beyond in every possible way. Your deep spirit of faithfulness to God, to the community, and to the person God made you to be, is a model and an inspiration to me. You have taught me to be courageous and vulnerable as a leader, how to run a vestry meeting and plan a liturgy, how to lovingly make tough choices, how to leave it all at the altar and in the pulpit, and laughing with you up at that altar one of the greatest joys of my life. The priest that I am is because of you. Saying goodbye is going to be so hard, but you have prepared us well and as you move into whatever God is calling you and your family into next, I am so grateful for everything you have given Good Shepherd and everything you have given me.

This church, folks! This church. The other essential ingredient for a curacy is a teaching congregation and I could not have imagined a congregation that lives more fully into the identity of teaching parish. This interim time has taught us a lot. It has meant learning who we are at our core and what that means as we live our ministry, asking what great adventure God is calling us on next. This a community joyfully committed to Jesus' central message of love, justice, and compassion for all which calls us to care deeply about each other and our neighbors and we tend to have quite a lot of fun doing it. And I think this community is so strong as a teaching congregation because all of us, every single person in this parish family, we all have something to learn and we all have something to teach. The confirmands and their adult mentors who meet together to learn across generations about where God is working in each other's lives. The book groups that wrestle with tough topics, bringing their stories and questions into community and finding the answers together. CGS Grows, who with minimal gardening experience but a desire to know our neighbors and the front door families better, partnered with other local organizations to turn the lot next door into a community garden, teaching local kids about nutrition. Every day that I have shown up to be your priest you have taught me something about faithfully following God

through change, staying true to who you are while being open to the new things that God is doing in this amazing place, and as your curate and beyond I am so excited to walk with you into what is next for this community.

As we enter this new chapter, as we say goodbye to Pastor Alanna and as we welcome a new Rector, even as this feels equal parts challenging and exciting, we will be moving forward together as a family with all the lessons we have learned from being a church that has come through 138 years stronger than ever, blessed by all those who have taught us, a community that is dedicated through it all to learning and growing in our relationship with God and each other, stepping out together in faith to see what this great new adventure will teach us.