

July 22, 2020



Friends and Family of St. Mark,

My heart is filled with joy and gratitude as I look back on my time with the people of St. Mark over the past year and a half. This beloved community has shown me true welcome and given me a sense of belonging from the very beginning. The Holy Spirit is alive and active within this community, and I am humbled to have been a part of our shared ministry. It is therefore with a heavy heart that I must share that the time has come for me to say goodbye to the people of St. Mark. I take comfort, however, in the knowledge that the Holy Spirit remains at work in this place and so I know that the relationships that have been built will continue in the years to come.

As many of you know, my partner, Garth, and I moved to Minnesota three years ago for him to attend Luther Seminary. With two years of schooling and a year of internship under his belt, we were prepared for a final year of classes in St. Paul. But like with all things, the pandemic has uprooted our “plans” and encouraged us to make new ones (probably a lot of Holy Spirit at work there, too). These new plans entail us moving back to Colorado where Garth will return to full-time work for a company that has supported him, and us, through our years in Minnesota. He will finish his seminary classes remotely as an online student.

As for what is next for me—I am not completely sure! It is bittersweet to take this next step. Above all the things I love about being in Minnesota, I have loved the community of St. Mark most. Colorado is where our family is and being closer to them has been a driving force, especially in the midst of this unknown. In the next few weeks I plan on spending intentional time sitting with God and being ready to listen, especially for what is next in my career.

My second week at St. Mark was Paul Oman’s Drawn to the Word Worship. The way that Paul tells the story of Christ through his art is a beautiful mystery. You aren’t sure exactly how it’s all starting. You are part of the process as the story unfolds and the work comes to life. My time at St. Mark has been similar to this experience. I wasn’t entirely sure what to expect, but was excited and ready to be a part of the ministry of the church. And throughout my time I watched the continued work of God unfold and come to life—from service projects to youth events, fellowship nights and faith formation opportunities. For those who remember, Paul flips the art upside down (or right-side up!) and surprises most of us—much like the pandemic throwing us all a curveball. But just like the Great Commission painting comes together, so do the people of St. Mark as we learn new ways to worship together and connect. And just because the painting is complete does not mean the story has ended. We view the piece in the Sanctuary regularly and continually see new things in the painting from different perspectives. The next months to come in the life of St. Mark will also bring new gifts from different perspectives!

Thank you, St. Mark family, for sharing Christ’s light, love, and grace with me. Thank you for your friendship and hospitality. Thank you for the laughter and memories. As someone dear told me, “Once you have been loved by St. Mark you will always be loved by St. Mark”.

Peace,

Tory Plucheck