

Michelle, you are being charged today with one essential task that carries enormous responsibility. One that no one else can fulfill for you. One that is extremely challenging and will require faith, persistence and trust in our Creator. That essential task is **be yourself**.

Before we met in person, it was clear that you are a person who researches carefully before moving into the unknown. That your gifts of reflection, communication and collaboration would be used during each interaction. It was obvious that your genuine, calm and caring spirit came as a fruit of the Spirit in the form of "gentleness." You listen to the Holy Spirit and identify challenges, bringing courage to the hurting people you see before you. In this human world, you discern that those within your sight need Jesus.

You bring many gifts that members of the congregation easily recognize. Each word out of your mouth is sincere and responsive to the person or group with whom you communicate. Your sense of humor and love have been demonstrated to all you have connected with. This church is gifted with incredibly talented members. Your sincere faith will help guide the individuals here as you lead and facilitate discernment where God is leading this family.

When you arrived in Laramie, one of the first things you told this congregation, is that you would not solve all of our problems. Thank you. I ask you to continue to hold true to your promise to listen and to work together with all of us, as you shepherd the lost and return the wandering to the fold of our Lord.

As you preach on a Sunday morning, or share coffee with a friend, it is clear that as a lifelong learner, the time you take to study Scriptures will teach, inspire and lead the Lord's people to take a step forward on their journey in faith. Do not let distraction impede you from this learning and prayer each day.

I challenge you to continue to be who God calls you to be in the face of the sin you encounter. I ask you to continue to demonstrate patience and mindfulness as the "urgent" tries to pull you away from what God has asked of you. Use gratitude to spend time with Todd in His creation to rest and restore your soul.

The world where we live today, both inside and outside these walls is so different from the world our members experienced twenty years ago, ten weeks ago, or even yesterday. As nothing can separate us from the love of God, hope must be shared with all those you encounter.

While your charge today may be simple, it is incredibly difficult. **Be who He created you to be. Be yourself.** This is whom we need. Continue to immerse your being in His teaching. Use your "resolute honesty and astute leadership" to show a portion of the Grace that our Sustainer has given you to form relationships and share the Love and Forgiveness of the Redeemer.