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**Pastor Lisa Vaughn is celebrating her fifth anniversary as an ordained Anglican priest. She ministers to congregations in Hatchet Lake and Terence Bay, near Halifax. (PETER DUFFY)**

*Five years of bringing spirit to rural parishes*

SHE'S impossible to miss in a crowd. For one thing, Lisa Vaughn is a tall, effervescent woman who radiates a love of life. For another, she's the owner of a laugh that's truly infectious. But most of all, my dear friend is likely to be the only woman in the room wearing the clerical collar of an Anglican priest.

Lisa and I have known each other since she worked in the Herald newsroom, back in the 1990s. Then she heard the calling to the priesthood. Lisa, 39, was ordained five years ago this summer and became minister at St. Timothy's in Hatchet Lake and St. Paul's in Terence Bay, two rural Halifax parishes.

It's Wednesday evening and I've driven out to St. Timothy's to wish her happy anniversary. Tonight is Bible study night, what she calls "the engine that drives the community," and her flock is starting to gather. As she's showing me around her church, Lisa points out the various renovations that were completed last year. For example everything on the chancel is now on wheels, even the altar.

"It gives us some flexibility for our worship space," she says. "Some people weren't entirely happy with the castors," she admits with a grin. "Messing with the altar was like messing with Jesus."

Actually, Pastor Lisa has messed with quite a few things since she came here. She introduced a "Jeans-and-Jesus" theme to Sunday evening services, complete with a small band playing Christian rock.

Yes, she says, it was a bit of an upheaval, but like everything else, it was approved by the church council.

Parishioner Ann Moore, who plays the guitar during Sunday evening services, adores Lisa. "She has tons of energy but she works too hard!" she tells me. "We love her dearly."

Committed as she is to her vocation, my friend is still very much a modern woman with 21st-century tastes. Not only does she visit the gym twice a week, she loves to listen to music on her iPod. Of the two parishes, Lisa has introduced more change at St. Timothy's, particularly in terms of contemporary music, than at St. Paul's, which has the older, more traditional congregation of the two.

I chuckle. "So you've really been turning things on their head here!"

She grins broadly. "I think they were ready for change," she says.