

LIFE AT THE SEM

June 2020

Ryan and Kari Maser

PRAYER REQUESTS

- For Kari, as she concludes her time at Christ Lutheran/Helping Hands daycare, and for Ryan, as he finishes his vicarage experience at Zion Lutheran.
- For those affected in various ways by the coronavirus (COVID-19), that God grant healing, strength, and a cure.
- For our nation and the people of this land, that God would bring healing, peace, and reconciliation.

ALL I WANT

It's funny how we often gravitate to a particular song when we're going through a season of life. As avid music listeners, Kari and I find ourselves finding a favorite song while we're washing dishes, working out in the mornings, or going for a drive. It might be the beat, the melody or harmony, the artist's voice that stands out or becomes catchy.

Sometimes it's not so funny - it's honestly shocking how words or a verse from a song can jump out at you. You just can't seem to get enough - you crave those words to the point they are stuck in your head throughout the day. It's like those words were meant for you in that moment.

The words might mean something - they recall a favorite memory, person, or event. They may even teach you something new, and you must listen to the lesson twice, thrice, or more! Or, even more powerful, they point you to God and what He has done for you.

I recently came across a song that I can't get enough of. It's an older one - from 2004 - titled "All I Want" by Michael W. Smith. Perhaps you have heard of it - if not, I encourage you to look it up and give it a listen! The lyrics that stand out to me the most come in the first and second stanzas:

All I have in this world
Is fire from above
All I have in this world
Is you
And all the journeys I have walked
I know you've walked them too
All I want is to be faithful
All I want is you

Reflecting on how these words applies to my life has been a true joy. When I think about what matters most in my life, I think about my family, my wife, my friends. Our possessions, everything we hold near and dear - hobbies included. But ultimately what matters is having a relationship with God through Christ. As the good ol' saying goes - 'naked we come into this world, naked we leave' - all we truly have, the thing that is guaranteed through the highs and lows, the thick and thin, the storms of life, is **faith**.

The second stanza talks about the journeys of life. I recall and reflect back on the past several years - from going to Concordia-Nebraska to Seminary to wrapping up the final month of vicarage and soon moving back to campus (!), and all the opportunities Kari and I both have had to grow, mature, learn, and serve. It is truly comforting to know that the Son of God has walked this earth and He goes before us in our journey of life and ministry. His promise in Matthew 28:20 rings clear - "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." No matter where God leads us, what matters is faith. What matters is Him.

ALL THE JOURNEYS WE HAVE WALKED

The month of June has flown by – like any other month! Kari continues working at Helping Hands in Norfolk (the daycare at Christ Lutheran). She is grateful for the full-time hours, and always has an adventure in the infant room! She will be leaving the daycare in mid-July so that she can focus on packing and transitioning to her preschool teacher duties at Immanuel Lutheran School, Wentzville, MO.

We had the opportunity to spend time with family in Minnesota, as we took some vacation time to visit Ryan's parents and siblings – and several others! It was a refreshing and fun time, to see a change of scenery and to share some laughs. We also appreciated a visit from Kari's parents and uncle for a short successful weekend of fishing in Pierce. And, we **finally** celebrated the graduation of Pierce High school seniors and Zion Lutheran 8th graders, and the confirmation of 18 young people. As things continue to open here in Nebraska, we also enjoy being able to share visits with Zion and community members – we aim to soak up as much as we can!

As we look ahead to the last month of our time here in Pierce, we can't thank God enough for the wonderful blessing it has been to be here this year. We are grateful not only for what we learned these past 11 months, but the adventure this journey has been. We praise God for the people we have met, His provision, His faithfulness, and His abundant grace. While it will be hard to leave, we are eager to be reunited with classmates and friends and to complete this chapter of preparation.

A few significant dates/notes:

- **July 26th** – Ryan's last day/final sermon at Zion Lutheran, Pierce
- **July 27th** – Ryan and Kari move back to St. Louis. Our **new address** will be:

**7 Founders Way Unit A
St. Louis, MO 63105**

Thank you again for all your prayers, support, and encouragement as we seek to be faithful in all we are called to do!

God's blessings,

Ryan and Kari